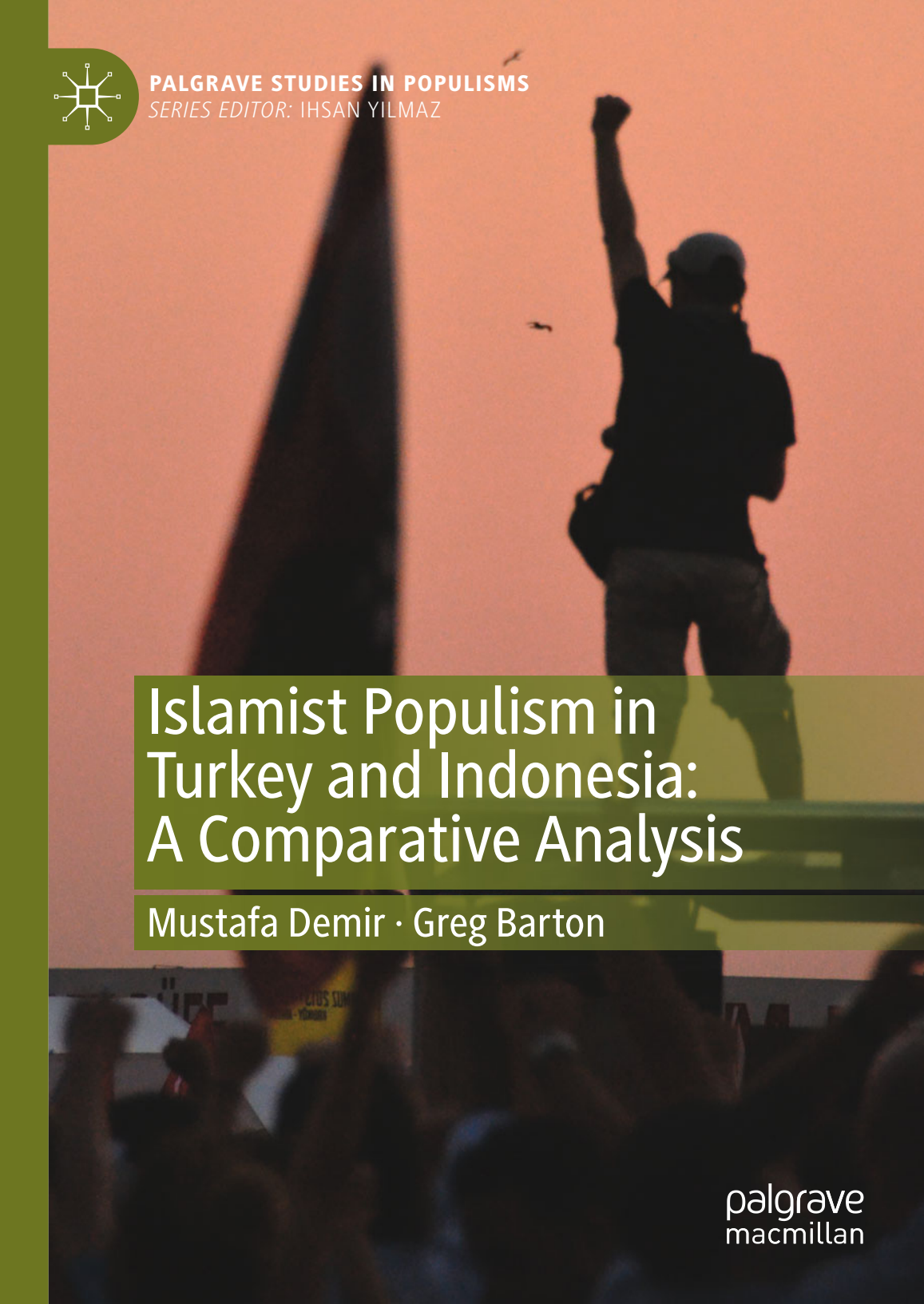

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Islamist Populism in Turkey and Indonesia: A Comparative Analysis

Mustafa Demir · Greg Barton

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Mustafa Demir · Greg Barton

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Preface

In Muslim-majority regions, democracies are rare, and those that exist exhibit various shades of democratic development, ranging from 'flawed' to 'hybrid' regimes. Despite aspirations for progress in their democratic journeys, recent democracy indices indicate that democracy has been backsliding in some of these countries over the last decade, partly due to the rise of populist politics. Populist movements have exploited cultural insecurities—both real and imagined—to gain, maintain, and consolidate political power, particularly in flawed democracies and hybrid regimes. In Muslim-majority countries such as Turkey and Indonesia, religion—specifically Islam—has become a central instrument in the populist playbook. Populist actors have constructed a religious-civilizational framework within which they create political binaries, manipulate insecurities, and promote traditional anti-elite and anti-'other' antagonisms.

The literature on Islam and democracy presents a diverse range of perspectives and approaches, emphasizing the complex relationship between religion and politics in Muslim-majority countries that we have explored in the next section. These studies underscore the importance of context, historical development, and political dimensions in understanding the compatibility of Islam and democracy. However, the vulnerability of Islam and Muslims to populism is not adequately addressed. Although there is emerging interest in this area, there is still a need for case studies to explore how populism is employed to undermine

democratic credentials, eliminate political rivals, and ultimately consolidate authority. This book fills this gap by offering invaluable insights through an exploration of two prominent cases, Turkey and Indonesia.

In this book, we advance the notion that populism is a multifaceted phenomenon that relies on various pre-existing fractures within societies and cultures. Once in power, populism intensifies these differences to further consolidate its position, utilizing various state apparatuses such as state-controlled religious institutions. This comprehensive analysis offers insights into the growing trend of populism in the Muslim world and its impact on contemporary politics.

Populism, combined with Islamic identity politics, has become a core element of Turkey's ruling AKP ideology and is an emerging force in Indonesia. Initially, populism in both countries initially held some promise of possibly playing a democratizing role. However, once in power, populists have revealed themselves as opponents of pluralism, the rule of law, and the separation of powers—essential components for the functioning of liberal democracies. In recent years, social pluralism in Turkey and Indonesia has suffered at the hands of Islamist political actors.

Briefly, in this book, we explore the role of religion in populist politics, concentrating on the rise of authoritarianism in two Muslim-majority nations: Turkey and Indonesia. We contend that Islamic actors have been shaped by, and have in turn shaped, the contexts in which they exist. These contexts include colonization, decolonization, the rise of the nation-state, urbanization, Cold War politics, and the internet revolution. The current Islamist populist moment in the Muslim world is a result of a lengthy historical process, encompassing Islamist opposition to Western ideas, struggles against secular authoritarian actors, urbanization processes, the emergence of identity politics and the internet revolution, and international interventions by Western powers.

Throughout the book, we will discuss these contextual factors as we examine key political developments. These elements hold considerable explanatory power in understanding the unique behaviours of Islamic political and civil society actors, their emergence and growth, their power bases, constituencies, and current positions. As for this research we understand and define populism as a force undermining and backsliding democratic achievement and progress globally in the twenty-first century. We also focus on the religious aspect of populism, specifically Islamist populism.

Structure of the Book

This book offers a comprehensive analysis of the rise of Islamist movements and the decline of democracies in Turkey and Indonesia, focusing on the complex interplay between democracy, populism, and religion in these Muslim-majority countries. The book is divided into seven chapters, each delving into various aspects of the subject matter to provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the changing political landscape.

In the first chapter, we establish a solid conceptual foundation and clarify our theoretical approach to the subject. By highlighting the significance and effectiveness of populism as a lens for understanding the political transformations in Turkey and Indonesia, we set the stage for a more in-depth exploration of the factors at play.

The second chapter examines the central theoretical concepts and issues, focusing on the various dimensions of populism in the context of democracy, religion, and identity politics. We critically assess existing literature and clarify our theoretical and conceptual approach to provide a more nuanced understanding of the topic.

The third chapter investigates the historical and political developments that contributed to the rise of Islamism in Turkey. We explore the decline and fall of the Islamic Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire, as well as the emergence of Ottoman Islamism, to understand the ideological leanings of civil and political Islamists in Muslim-majority countries.

In the fourth chapter, we delve into Indonesia's rich history, examining its journey towards independence and the challenges faced during the democratization process. We scrutinize the policies implemented during the Suharto regime and the emergence of prominent Islamic organizations, setting the stage for exploring the evolution of civil and political Islam in relation to populist Islamism in contemporary Indonesia.

The fifth chapter investigates the trajectory of the Islamist AKP in Turkish politics, examining its initial democratization efforts and subsequent authoritarian shift. We emphasize the role of religious populism as a tool for authoritarianism in Muslim-majority countries and underscore the importance of protecting civil society and democratic values against such political movements.

In the sixth chapter, we examine the era of post-Suharto democratization in Indonesia, analysing the economic and political forces that led to the downfall of the Suharto regime. We explore the subject of Islamism

in Indonesia and its interplay with democracy, as well as the emergence of Islamic liberalism as a significant social movement.

The final chapter offers a comparative analysis of our findings, illustrating how populist Islamists have adeptly seized upon public anger towards corrupt secular authoritarian regimes and turned these negative emotions into public demand for populist solutions. Through this comparative lens, we aim to generate insights and stimulate further research and discussion on this important subject.

Overall, the book is structured to guide readers through a systematic exploration of the intricate relationship between democracy, populism, and religion in Turkey and Indonesia. We hope to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the changing political landscape in these Muslim-majority countries.

Guildford, UK — Mustafa Demir
Burwood, Australia — Greg Barton

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I (Mustafa) want to extend a special dedication to my wife, Esma. I am deeply grateful for her sacrifices and for standing by my side through thick and thin. Her presence in my life is a constant source of inspiration offering me her unwavering love and support. Additionally, I extend my profound gratitude to my friend Benjamin. His contributions have been remarkably significant, offering not just insightful discussions and the exchange of ideas, but also serving as a rich source of news and links that greatly enhanced the content of the book. Lastly, our beloved cat, Luna, has been an integral part of this journey. Her companionship, warmth, and soothing purrs have brought comfort during the long hours of writing and research. We are truly grateful for her endearing presence in our lives.

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London and Melbourne
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Mustafa Demir
Greg Barton

Contents

1 Introduction: Setting the Stage: Populism, Religion, and Democracy in Turkey and Indonesia 1
Introduction 1
Terminology and Theoretical Frame 2
Democracy, Populism, and Religion 3
Populism and Religion 5
Colonization, Secularism, and Islamism 6
Bibliography 7

2 Exploring the Dimensions of Populism: Democracy, Religion, and Identity Politics 13
Introduction 13
Democracy and the Muslim World 14
Conclusion 21
Bibliography 22

3 From Ottoman Empire to Modern Turkey: The Journey of Islamist Discourse in a Secular Majority Muslim Country 29
Introduction 29
The Sultanate, the Caliphate, and Ottoman Islamism 30
Transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a Modern Republic 33
Mustafa Kemal and the Establishment of the Modern Turkey 36

Islamism Under the Kemalist Rule 46
Conclusion 51
Bibliography 52

4 Indonesia's Journey to Independence and the Evolution of Political Islam: A Historical Perspective 59
Islam's Journey in Indonesia 59
The Colonial Era, First Under Portuguese and Later Dutch Rule 60
The Indonesian Independence Movement, Its Leader Sukarno, and the Pancasila Ideology 62
Decolonization, Islamic Movements, and Indonesian Nationalism 65
The Suharto Coup and the Demise of the First Democratic Era 67
Conclusion 75
Bibliography 76

5 The Rise and Fall of Democracy in Turkey 81
Introduction 81
1980s, the Rise of Islamism in Turkey 84
Political Opportunity Structures and Islamist Ideological Change in the Late 1990s 85
The Rise of AKP and Its Democratic Decade Under Kemalist Hegemony 87
Islamists and Contingent Nature of Their Ideology 90
The 2016 Coup Attempt and the End of Democracy in Turkey 93
The Rise of Populist Islamism in Turkey 100
Radical İslamism in AKP Rhetoric: Martyrdom, Takfirism, and Jihadism 103
Conclusion 104
Bibliography 106

6 Post-suharto Democratization and State of Islamist Populism 113
Introduction 113
Breakdown of the Suharto Regime and Return to Democracy 114
Islamism in Indonesia 116
Official Repression and Underground Development of Islamism 117
Radical Islamists in Indonesia 119

Islamist Populism in Indonesia 121
Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) 122
Conclusion 128
Bibliography 129

7 Democracy, Populism, and Religion: A Comparative Analysis of the Rise of Populist Islamism in Turkey and Indonesia 137
Introduction 137
State of Democracy in Turkey and Indonesia 138
Rise of Religious Populism in Indonesia and Turkey 142
Bibliography 147

Index 155

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Setting the Stage: Populism, Religion, and Democracy in Turkey and Indonesia

Introduction

In this book, we explore the use of religion and faith for personal gains by populist political actors in two Muslim-majority countries, Turkey and Indonesia. We highlight that the current Islamist populist moment in the Muslim world is a consequence of a long historical process involving Islamist opposition to Western ideas, repression under and battles against secular authoritarian actors, urbanization, the rise of identity politics, the internet revolution, and international interventions by Western powers. We argue that Islamic actors have been shaped by, and in turn, have shaped the context in which they exist. This context includes colonization, decolonization, the rise of the nation-state, urbanization, Cold War politics, and the internet revolution. Throughout the book, we discuss these contextual factors while examining significant political developments, which hold considerable explanatory power in understanding the unique behaviours of Islamic political and civil society actors, their emergence and growth, their power bases, constituencies, and current positions.

Our book connects historical processes with crucial political transformations occurring in the modern era in both Turkey and Indonesia. It offers a fresh perspective on populist authoritarian turns and how religion has been employed in these two countries. Our aim is to provide

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readers with a scholarly foundation to help make sense of these complex processes.

By studying how Islamists in majority Muslim countries use religion in their populist appeal in the cases of Turkey and Indonesia, our book adopts a comparative approach that is valuable for students and academic scholars in politics, social psychology, sociology, international relations, and communication studies. These readers will be interested in how our book connects historical processes and their relevance and role in the political transformations taking place in the modern era.

The current Islamist populist moment in the Muslim world is a result of a lengthy historical process that involved Islamist opposition to Western ideas, repression under and battles against secular authoritarian actors (Barton 2006), processes of urbanization, the rise of identity politics and the internet revolution, and international interventions by Western powers. We argue that Islamic actors have been shaped by, and in turn have shaped, the context in which they exist. This context includes colonization, decolonization, the rise of the nation-state, urbanization, Cold War politics, and the internet revolution. Throughout the book, we will discuss these contextual factors as we examine key political developments. These elements hold significant explanatory power in understanding the unique behaviours of Islamic political and civil society actors, their emergence and growth, their power bases, constituencies, and current positions.

In this chapter, we initially provide a brief overview of scholarship on populism and the contested nature of its definition. We then map out the various dimensions (e.g. horizontal, vertical, and intersections of both) and aspects (civilizational) in which populism can exist and emerge as a political force. We also examine how religion, specifically Islam, is utilized within these dimensions to carve out populist binaries. Subsequently, we set out the historical context in which populist discourse and politics have emerged and dominated the political spectrum.

Terminology and Theoretical Frame

The current Islamist populist moment in the Muslim world is a consequence of a long historical process that involved Islamist opposition to Western ideas, repression under and battles against secular authoritarian actors, processes of urbanization, the rise of identity politics and the internet revolution, and international interventions by Western

powers (Barton 2009, 2020, 2022). We argue that Islamic actors have been shaped by and in turn shaped the context in which they exist. This context involved colonization, decolonization and the rise of the nation-state, urbanization, Cold War politics, and the internet revolution (Yilmaz 2023). Throughout the book, we will discuss these contextual issues as we examine important political developments. They have significant power to explain the peculiar behaviours of Islamic political and civil society actors, how they emerge and flourish, their power bases, their constituencies, and their current positions.

Populism has become an important political force across the Muslim world and is present and effective in the politics of both Indonesia and Turkey, and extremely influential in the latter, which is ruled by a populist authoritarian party. An abstract notion, populism has been defined in multiple ways. The most common approach today is to define populism as a set of ideas or a "thin-centred ideology" which may be "combined with other beliefs and ideas of politics" (la Torre 2019, 7). Populism is also sometimes understood to be a strategy (Weyland 2001), a discourse (Laclau 2005), or a political style (Moffitt 2017). However, in this book, we have adopted Mudde's ideological approach and define populism as an ideology or set of ideas that "considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the [pure] people" (Mudde 2004, 543). Beyond this minimal definition, it appears that populist antagonism has two dimensions: a vertical dimension which manifests as hostility between "the people" and "elites", and a horizontal dimension which manifests as hostility between "the people" and "others" (De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017).

Democracy, Populism, and Religion

In recent years, the relationship between Islam and democracy has become an increasingly critical topic in political discourse. Scholars have explored the compatibility of Islamic principles with liberal-democratic values and the ways in which Muslim-majority countries navigate the complex relationship between religion and politics (Hashemi 2009; Bruinessen 2018; Hadiz 2016; Schneier 2015; Barton 2015; Geri 2017).

Hashemi (2009) challenges the widely-held belief that religious politics and liberal-democratic development are inherently incompatible. He

argues for the necessity of rethinking democratic theory to incorporate the variable of religion in the development of liberal democracy. Hashemi contends that an indigenous theory of Muslim secularism is not only possible but essential for the advancement of liberal democracy in Muslim societies.

Utilizing a comparative approach, Martin van Bruinessen (2018) examines how Turkey and Indonesia invested heavily in the education of religious personnel and the dissemination of religious views that aligned with the drive for modernization and development. However, these efforts inadvertently enabled the social mobility of marginalized conservatives and facilitated their gradual control over parts of the state apparatus (Barton 2001, 2002).

Hadiz's "Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East" (2016) compares the evolution of Islamic populism in Indonesia to the Middle East, using approaches from historical sociology and political economy. Hadiz contends that competing strands of Islamic politics result from contemporary struggles over power and material resources and are rooted in a variety of social and historical contexts. This comparative framework sheds new light on the diverse trajectories of Islamic politics in the modern world.

Schneier (2015) investigates the political dimensions of Islam, analysing the relationship between politics and religion in forty-seven Muslim-majority countries, with a particular focus on Turkey and Indonesia. Schneier's findings suggest that the boundaries between church and state in the Islamic world are more variable and diverse than commonly assumed, and that the concept of "Islamic law" is more political than religious.

Maurizio Geri's "Ethnic Minorities in Democratizing Muslim Countries: Turkey and Indonesia" (2018) explores the treatment of ethnic minorities' demands for inclusiveness and autonomy in democratizing Muslim countries. Geri introduces the concept of "autonomization" and examines the securitization of Kurds in Turkey and the autonomization of Acehnese in Indonesia. The study aims to expand generalizations and comparisons by examining states with ethnic diversity and minimal religious diversity.

Moreover, there is an emerging trend examining Islamist populist politics in relation to democratic progress in majority Muslim countries. These studies primarily explore how Islam is politicized and crafted as

an instrument for populist appeal (Yilmaz 2020; Yilmaz et al. 2021a) and how populist Islamism undermines democratic achievements, leading to a transition towards authoritarianism (Barton 2021, Yilmaz and Barton 2021a, b; Yilmaz et al. 2021b, 2022; Yabanci 2022; Yilmaz et al. 2023b; Plaza-Colodro et al. 2023; Shukri 2023).

Populism and Religion

Prior to the 2010s, the relationship between religion and populism received limited scholarly attention (Mudde 2007, 296). However, it has since become evident that populist parties and movements frequently incorporate religion into their discourse and political agendas, demonstrating how religion can readily serve a populist programme (Yilmaz et al. 2021; Zúquete 2017; Marzouki et al. 2016). Religion is particularly useful in this context, as it offers a broader framework within which populism's vertical and horizontal dimensions can be situated. Populists can instrumentalize religion to define and sacralize "the people", while simultaneously characterizing individuals of other religions and secularists as inherently hostile and threatening to "the people" (Yilmaz and Morieson 2021; Yilmaz 2023; Yilmaz and Morieson 2023; Yilmaz and Demir 2023; Yilmaz et al. 2023c).

Religious populism is not an exclusively Islamic phenomenon; it manifests across various religious traditions worldwide (Yilmaz and Morieson 2023). For instance, Hindu populism, in the form of Hindutva, underpins the ideology of India's ruling BJP (McDonnell and Cabrera 2019, 488–490; Yilmaz 2023). Christian identity populism pervades Europe (Marzouki and McDonnell 2016, 5–6) and North America, where it was evident in the Tea Party and Trump movements. Nevertheless, the Islamic world may be particularly susceptible to religious populism due to generally higher levels of religiosity in Muslim-majority regions and the widespread desire among Muslims for political and economic reforms that would redistribute wealth and power from secular elites to "the people".

One of the key themes of this book is the rise of Islamist populism and how it can transform Muslims' aspirations for democracy and equality into demands for populist solutions. Despite appearing democratic on the surface, populist ideas often lead countries towards authoritarianism (Yilmaz 2023a; Yilmaz et al. 2023a). In both Indonesia and Turkey, Islamic populism has had a profound impact on politics and society. While populists have played a role in democratization, they have also been

responsible for de-democratizing their societies. Islamic populists in both countries have constructed their political base, "the people", by using Islam and creating binary oppositions that foster demand for populist solutions (Yilmaz et al. 2021b). Populists in both nations have claimed that 'the ummah' is threatened by non-Muslim internal and external forces, and that only they—the populists—have the political will to fight this existential threat (Barton et al. 2021; Yilmaz and Barton 2021c).

This book highlights how Islamic populism has succeeded in Turkey, reshaping the country in its image, while Indonesian populists, while influential, have not fared as well in elections (Barton et al. 2021a, b). It shows that Islamic populism is not an inevitable outcome of democracy in Islamic contexts and can be defeated electorally by pluralist political parties and movements.

Colonization, Secularism, and Islamism

Islamic actors are not isolated entities; instead, they have been influenced by and have, in turn, impacted the contexts in which they participate. These contexts encompass colonization, decolonization, the emergence of nation-states, urbanization, Cold War politics, and the internet revolution. Throughout this book, we will explore these contextual factors while examining significant political developments. These factors hold considerable explanatory power for understanding the unique behaviours of Islamic political and civil society actors, their emergence and growth, power bases, constituencies, and present positions.

For instance, the rise of Islamism is closely connected to the Muslim world's experience of Western colonialism and the subsequent authoritarian secular nationalism that disregarded Islamic norms, dismantled Islamic law foundations, and forcibly imposed secularism. Secularism has generally been negatively received in the Muslim world due to its association with Western colonialism and secular authoritarianism. Perceived as an imported anti-Islamic concept, secularism must reinterpret Islamic ideas on governance rather than constructing its own religion-like ideology to establish itself within the Islamic world. In this vein, although Turkey was never colonized by the West, the establishment of a secular Republic has been viewed as a colonization of Islamic identity by Islamic groups in Turkey. Consequently, the founding elite and cadres of the secular Republic were seen as collaborators with the "anti-Islamic" West.

On the one hand, Indonesia has benefited from the enduring influence of a significant group of progressive Islamic intellectuals who promote civil Islam. The most prominent figures among them are Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid. (Barton 1995, 1996, 1997a, b, 2002a). However, the Reformasi Era, which followed the end of Suharto's authoritarian regime, has been marked by intense conflict and rivalry among political elites (Barton 2001a, b, 2002, 2003, 2008, 2010). In this climate, some of these elites have attempted to exploit religious sentiment to gain support and undermine their opponents. As a result, there has been a rising trend of Islamist populism in Indonesia. This movement presents itself as being concerned with social justice issues and aims to unite the "ummah" (Islamic community) around common goals in their struggle for power and resources against other socioeconomic groups in Indonesia, notably the ethnic Chinese community that dominates the corporate sector.

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CHAPTER 2

Exploring the Dimensions of Populism: Democracy, Religion, and Identity Politics

Introduction

Populist movements have sought at times to capitalize on the growing influence of Muslim identity politics. Populists in Turkey and Indonesia, for example, achieved significant political influence by blaming social and economic problems on government elites, who they claim have been working—in tandem with external and internal non-Muslim enemies—against the interests of the common people (Barton 2021; Barton et al. 2021b, 2021c; Hadiz 2018, 576; Yilmaz and Barton 2021a, 2021b; Yilmaz et al. 2017; Yilmaz 2018, 54–55). Populist groups in both nations use religion to create a religious-civilizational framework within which they formulate the traditional anti-elite and anti- 'other' populist antagonisms (Yilmaz and Morieson 2023b; 2023c; Yilmaz et al. 2023) . In doing this, they describe a world in which civilizations are doomed to clash with one another, and in which Muslims must band together and fight non-Muslims, particularly the Christian West, which is often portrayed as an existential threat (Barton 2009; Yilmaz and Barton 2021; Yilmaz and Shakil 2021a, 2021b). The rise of populism has great political significance in the Muslim-majority world. First, it is a form of anti-secular, anti-liberal politics which though it claims to act in the name of the people marks a turn against democracy and pluralism and towards authoritarianism. Second, populism in Muslim-majority regions—as often is the

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M. Demir and G. Barton, *Islamist Populism in Turkey and Indonesia: A Comparative Analysis*, Palgrave Studies in Populisms,
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case elsewhere—is allied with religious groups that practice religion-based identity politics and promote notions of a clash of (religion-based) civilizations. Finally, despite its promise to create a more representative and democratic society, populism represents a threat to democracy. Turkey has already succumbed to populist authoritarianism, with far-reaching damage to every institution critical to open society and accountable government. This leaves Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, as the outstanding example of a Muslim democracy (Barton 2006, 2010). If Indonesia were to turn against pluralism and democracy and towards Islamist authoritarian populism it would constitute a great blow to any hopes of a democratic transformation elsewhere in the Muslim-majority world.

We begin by examining democracy in the Muslim world where it is immediately apparent that democracy is conspicuously absent. In the Middle East, only Tunisia can be said to be a (weak) democracy. The leading Muslim democracies of Turkey and Indonesia have experienced democratic backsliding in recent years associated with radical and populist Islamist elements. This is despite high-levels of support for democracy within the citizenry of most Muslim nations. We then move to discuss conceptual arguments pertaining to Islam and democracy. Finally, we discuss the rise of populism and its significance in the Muslim-majority world as threat to the democratic ideas and ideals.

Democracy and the Muslim World

The academic community is in agreement that the immediate prospects for the development of democracy in the Muslim world are grim and the challenges daunting. Observers point to a persistent and growing 'democracy gap' between the Muslim world and the rest of the developing countries. Adrian Karatnycky (2002) claims that "while the countries of Latin America, Africa, East Central Europe, and South and East Asia experienced significant gains for democracy and freedom over the last twenty years, the Islamic world experienced an equally significant increase in the number of repressive regimes" (2002). Now, twenty years after Karatnycky's remarks, it's evident that the majority of democratic movements and efforts in the Islamic world have fallen prey to populist politics (Yilmaz et al. 2021). This has further widened the 'democracy gap', Karatnycky highlighted. It is important to recognize that, demographically, Arab states represents only one-fifth of the Muslim world. Those

living in the Arab world, or studying it, often make the mistake of succumbing to the common conceit that the Arab world is the heart and centre of the Muslim world. Whilst this was undeniably true in terms of historical origins it misses the reality that from very early in Islamic history, up until the present, the leading Islamic thinkers were not, in fact, Arabs, even if they wrote much of their work in Arabic. Throughout the history of Islamic thought, the majority of innovative contributions have come from Persian, Asian, Turkish, and African thinkers.

Writing on the same topic, Alfred Stepan and Graeme Robertson (2003) argue that the 'democracy gap' that Karatnycky and others referred to is perhaps "an Arab more than Muslim electoral gap". Their study shows that "the difference between Arab and non-Arab majority countries in regard to several years of rights performance is striking". In particular, none of the sixteen Arab Muslim-majority countries have had their most powerful political positions filled by free and fair elections and only Lebanon had three consecutive years of moderately high political rights between 1972 and 1992 (and that was between 1972 and 1975). This constitutes a stark contrast to non-Arab Muslim countries, as 12 out of 31 of these countries had three consecutive years of moderately high political and electoral rights between 1972 and 2002. These findings are supported by Nabli and Silva-Jauregui's (2008) study of several different indexes and datasets such as the Policy IV dataset, Freedom House Political Rights index, and World Bank's Index on Public Accountability. Furthermore, Stepan and Robertson's study shows that, when compared to their levels of GDP per capita income, Arab countries are significant 'underachievers'. That is, their scores for electoral rights are significantly lower than what was expected, their levels of income. The 'uniqueness' of the Arab world is amplified when taking into consideration that 'the noncompetitive Arab countries began with the lowest levels of ethnolinguistic fragmentation'. Instead, the non-Arab countries that are electorally competitive emerged with the highest levels of ethnolinguistic fragmentation. This leads scholars to speculate about the possible causes of such disturbing phenomena in the Arab Muslim world. Stepan and Robertson (2003, 41) point out the importance of colonial experience: "Many contemporary Arab states have relatively new and arbitrary boundaries because they were cut out of the Ottoman Empire, and were afterwards occupied and often reconfigured as European colonies". They further point at destructive role of US foreign policy in the region, given that the United States has historically supported authoritarian regimes in

the region through military aid to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran (pre-revolution), and that this policy has not changed despite the end of the Cold War. Stepan and Robertson concur with Eva Bellin's (2012) conclusion that the growing electoral gap between the Arab countries and the rest of the developing countries has a lot to do with the tenacity of US policy as such: the Middle East is "exceptional in that the Cold War's end has not signalled Great Power retreat from patronage of authoritarianism, as has been the case in Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere in the world". However, these are mainly external reasons. There are some others, such as Huntington (1993), who argue internal reasons such as culture and values. Huntington argues that Islam as a civilization does not give space to democracy. Some others refer to role of oil and natural resources politically pacifying democratic demands of the populations, especially in oil-rich gulf countries (Beblawi and Luciani 1987; Ross 2001; Diamond 2010).

Identity Politics

Identity issues have long been at the forefront of politics in the Muslim world. Contemporary identities in the Muslim world have been greatly influenced, among other factors, by Muslim encounters with the Western modernity and imperial power. From the Middle East to Southeast Asia, from Central Asia to the Indian Horn, Muslim encounters with European empires of Great Britain, France, Russia (later, Soviet), and Netherlands and various social, political and economic notions introduced by these empires (such as capitalism, communism, atheism, gender equality, and modernism) have led to the creation of variegated identities in the Muslim world. In the contemporary era, Muslim encounters in Western countries contribute to creation of transnational public spheres within which the idea of being a Muslim is continuously contested/negotiated. In their edited volume, Aitchison et al. (2007) bring some of this diversity of Muslim identities into the light. The chapters in the book demonstrate 'the ways in which markers of Muslim identities are resisted, contested and manipulated' in the Muslim world and the Western settings (Aitchison et al. 2007, 2; Yilmaz and Demir 2023).

In an interesting chapter in the book, William Rowe (2007) discusses the evolution of Muslim identity in Central Asia. Rowe shows that early encounters between the Russian imperial house and the Central Asians in

the nineteenth century created a somewhat classical discourses of 'Orientalism' on the part of the Russians. Labelling the Muslims as 'fanatics', Russians 'denie[d] the other moral authority and render[ed] [their] own cause as enlightenment' (Rowe 2007, 143). The Soviets moved this project further, openly launching a war against religion under the banner of emancipation and modernism. As a result, Muslims had to abandon public expressions of religiosity in any form and 'develop[ed] a sense of religion whereby the daily exercises of religion would become more familial or personal' (Rowe 2007, 146). Limited to the 'cultural' sphere, religion and religious identity were articulated during life-cycle rituals such as birth, marriage, circumcision, and death. Today, Chinese Muslims, Uyghurs, live under similar circumstances where they have to hide any religious practice and go through 're-education' camps that resemble modern-day concentration camps. More than three million Uyghurs are in such camps today, without any information about their whereabouts or what they are going through. Against this backdrop, socialism or communism has been associated with repressive policies towards Islam and Muslims. In Muslim-majority regions, communist parties or movements were regarded as anti-Islam 'Godless' by the religious population/people. During the Cold War, the Western block led by the United States has used/supported religion(s) and religious movements to spread anti-communism and organize/mobilize anti-communist movements (Landau 1990; Jacobs 2006).

Another, more mainstream, strain of research on Muslim identity politics focused on the process whereby religion has become an increasingly prominent marker of identity among Muslims in the contemporary period. In her comprehensive article on Muslim identity politics, Salwa Ismail (2004) claims that the way religion shapes Muslim identity is influenced not by theological doctrines, but social practices. Hence, she rejects those reductionist accounts that posit Islam as the determining factor of identity among Muslims. Ismail powerfully rejects those scholarly accounts that analyse Islamic identity based on binary oppositions between (post)modernity and Islam. She criticizes these accounts for 'hold[ing] on to a notion of essential Islam and an essential Islamism or fundamentalism' (Ismail 2004, 623). Instead, she locates 'Islam' within the broader social and political processes that encompass Muslims and shape their daily experiences. These processes include globalization, rise of consumerism, rationalization, individualization, commercialization, and commodification. Supporting Ismail, a report by Tufyal Choudhury

(2007) analyses the process of radicalization among British Muslims. He shows that various external reasons, most importantly, 'public devaluation' and 'disparagement of Muslims … have led to increased in-group solidarity and identification on the basis of religion' (Choudhury 2007, 3). In addition to these external factors, Muslims also construct their identity 'as a mechanism for internal empowerment' (Choudhury 2007, 10). In particular, Muslim groups provide a 'positive role model' for young Muslims (Barton et al. 2013; Barton 2014a, 2014b; Barton et al. 2021a). Furthermore, some Muslims embrace a 'strong religious identity' as a way to 'resist' cultural practices that restricted their parents' freedom of movement and activity (Choudhury 2007, 11). This was the initial practice among the Nation of Islam followers, who have seen their new identity as 'resistance' and 'racial empowerment' to be able to be free of the centuries of oppression and mistreatment. Identity politics plays an important role, both positively and negatively, depending on which one is being fed more, not only by the usage among the people but by the governments' practices and social issues.

The Failure of Modern Nation-States and the Rise of Islamism

Many scholars also contend that some of the most important factors that led to the rise of Islamism in the Muslim world are connected to the failures of modern nation-states that emerged after the end of colonialism (Fuller 2003; see also Sayyid 1997). In the period following the World War II, when most Muslim countries that had come under European control were achieving political independence, the major expressions of protest and of radical reform were shaped by Western democratic, socialist, and Marxist perspectives. The nation-states that emerged in the Muslim world were mainly shaped by the ideologies of nationalist secularism. However, these secular nationalist regimes could not live up to the expectations of the Muslim people, as they were marked by absolute authoritarianism, crippling economic deprivation, endemic corruption, and political instability. Such failures led people to question the validity and effectiveness of the ideologies of secularism, nationalism, and socialism. As a result, a growing number of people have started to look at Islam as a source of inspiration in difficult times.

Graham Fuller (2003) concurs with these arguments as he also points at political and economic failures of secular nationalist Arab regimes in triggering widespread disillusionment on part of people with secular

ideologies: "the defeat of leading Arab states in the 1967 Arab–Israeli war served as a catalyst to the perception that Arab nationalism had been "tried and found wanting" as a means of facing the Israeli challenge, strengthening the Arab world, bringing good governance, and raising living standards. This opened space for the Islamist alternative" (Fuller 2003, 43).

Ayoob (2008) highlights that a significant factor contributing to the ascent of Islamist politics was the increase in authoritarianism. In many countries across the Middle East and North Africa, corrupt and authoritarian regimes systematically dismantled secular democratic oppositions. Since these secular opposition groups often represented the primary resistance in these countries, secular dictators turned to employing religious rhetoric and even actively endorsing Islamist groups as a strategy to undermine and delegitimize the secular opposition forces. This strategy, perhaps unintentionally, created political opportunities and increased the popularity of Islamist political formations across the Muslim world. As a result, Islamist organizations stepped in to fill the political void and became vital providers of social and economic support through their extensive networks. Notably, as Islamists rose to become significant social and political forces, many secular activists, fearing a regression to the "dark ages" under Islamist rule, began backing authoritarian regimes in their countries, often sacrificing democratic principles. These dynamics have laid the groundwork for a populist political era, with Islamist groups gaining influence due to the weakening of secular democratic opposition by authoritarian regimes.

Religious Populisms

The rise of religious populisms globally (Yilmaz and Morieson 2023a; 2021) has affected a number of democratic Muslim-majority nations, pushing them towards authoritarianism and anti-plural exclusivist politics based on identification with Islam. Islamic populist discourse may be present in the politics of post-revolutionary Iran (Hadiz 2016; Alamdari 2005; Dorraj 2014) and in the so-called Global Jihad movement (Zúquete 2017). More recently, Islamic populist parties have won government in Turkey and Pakistan, and established themselves as a minor yet significant force in Indonesia.

Islamic populism has emerged as a formidable political force in several democratic Muslim-majority countries. This rise can be attributed to

widespread public discontent with political representation, particularly a perception that democratically elected leaders, along with the broader 'elite' in bureaucracy, media, and academia, are not acting in the majority's interests. Public dissatisfaction alone, however, doesn't automatically translate into populist electoral success. If that were the case, we would witness more instances of populism both in the present and historically. For populist movements to ascend to power, they need to capitalize on public resentment towards the elites and 'others'—groups that populists often accuse, rightly or wrongly, of being responsible for societal and economic challenges. This exploitation of public anger is a crucial factor in the emergence and success of Islamic populism in the political landscape of these nations.

Islamic populists in Turkey, Pakistan, and Indonesia have found it relatively easy to exploit public dissatisfaction with governing elites and the pace of economic development (Barton 2021; Barton et al. 2021b, 2021c; Yilmaz and Barton 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). Beyond exploiting public anger related to economic issues, Islamic populists have introduced a powerful religious element into populist ideation. Couching vertical anger towards elites and horizontal fear of anger towards others within a wider religious and civilizationalist framework, Islamic populists have created a religious populism which classifies individuals based upon their civilizational identity (Yilmaz and Morieson 2021). For Islamic populists, the concept of 'the people'—or the ummah—is intrinsically linked to Islam and Islamic civilization. In their narrative, the adversaries are non-Muslims from different civilizations, positioning them as the 'other' or horizontal enemies. By framing 'the people' and identifying their civilizational enemies, Islamic populists accuse the elites of either colluding with these adversaries or failing to adequately defend against them. This rhetoric creates a narrative of existential crisis, suggesting that Islamic civilization is under threat from other civilizations, thereby galvanizing support and justifying their political stance.

Equally, because Islamism combines "material and cultural understandings of religion" and is "a multivalent religio-moral populism – a potentially explosive articulation of different class interests and religious cravings" (Tugal 2002, 86), it has proven itself to be especially powerful when adhered with populism. Populism and Islamism form a potent combination in part because both are concerned with creating more materially just societies and reject pluralism. Islamist populists in Turkey, Pakistan, and Indonesia thus claim that Islam is the only solution to

economic and wealth inequality (Hassan 2020; Hadiz 2016). In Turkey, the AKP "very frequently point out" the vast wealth gap between rich and poor in the country, and ascribe it to Turkey's post-Ottoman "alienation from Islam" (Tugal 2002, 103).

Yet while Islamic populists may at times play a role in bringing the previously marginalized voices of ordinary people into politics, and narrowing the gap between wealthy and impoverished citizens, there are often negative consequences associated with Islamic populist influence and rule. First, like all populists, Islamic populists claim that the 'will of people' is paramount. Yet they also claim that only they—the Islamist populists—understand and represent the will of the people. This being so, Islamic populists often substitute themselves, or even a single leader, for the people and seek to eliminate any constraints on the popular will. In the case of Turkey, as is described in detail in this book, a single leader—Tayyip Erdogan—claims a direct connection with the ummah and has established himself as a dictator on this basis. Thus, by exploiting public anger towards elites and others, and couching populism's vertical and horizontal dimensions within an Islamic framework in which Muslims are beset by enemies and must look only to Islam for political solutions (Yilmaz et al. 2023), Islamic populists attack fundamental elements of liberal democracy: rule of law, the protection of minorities, and pluralism.

Throughout this book, we show how populism has emerged in democratic Islamic societies, and describe the role it plays in drawing attention to social and material inequalities and expanding the public sphere to include previously unheard voices. Yet we also demonstrate how populism, especially when allied with radical Islamism, has become a threat to democracy and pluralism within a number of democratic Muslim-majority nations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has laid a solid foundation for the rest of the book by exploring the central theoretical concepts and issues that will be examined in further detail in subsequent chapters. By emphasizing the various dimensions of populism in the context of democracy, religion, and identity politics, we have shed light on the complexities of the political landscape in which we find ourselves.

Furthermore, our discussion on the connection between the failure of modern secular nation-states and the rise of Islamism in relation to religious shade/form of populism has provided insight into the underlying factors that have contributed to these phenomena. Through a critical assessment of the existing literature, we have provided clarity on our theoretical and conceptual approach, which will guide our analysis throughout the book.

We also highlighted that Islamic populism should not be viewed entirely in a negative light, particularly as it has played a role in empowering previously marginalized communities and reducing social and material inequalities. However, because Islamic populism rejects pluralism and is founded on religious exclusivism and civilizational, it presents a threat to democracy. Indeed, Turkey's AKP has eroded democratic norms and degraded institutions, using the state to perpetuate its religious populist programmed. Thus, we must understand Islamic populism as a fundamentally anti-pluralist and anti-democratic political phenomenon, which like other forms of radicalism must be overcome if Muslims are to establish long-lasting democracies.

Ultimately, this chapter sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the factors that have shaped the changing political landscape in the Muslim-majority countries of Turkey and Indonesia. By examining the interplay between democracy, populism, and religion, we hope to contribute to a better understanding of these complex issues and offer insights into how we can address the challenges facing modern democracies around the world.

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CHAPTER 3

From Ottoman Empire to Modern Turkey: The Journey of Islamist Discourse in a Secular Majority Muslim Country

Introduction

In this chapter, we turn our attention towards the rise of Islamism in Turkey, examining the historical and political developments that have contributed to its emergence as a dominant force in the country's politics. To understand this phenomenon, we delve into the decline and fall of the Islamic Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire, which marked a turning point in the history of Islam and paved the way for the rise of Ottoman Islamism.

By exploring this early period, we gain insight into the ideological leanings of civil and political Islamists in Muslim-majority countries, particularly Turkey and Indonesia. This understanding is crucial to comprehending the complex interplay between religion, politics, and populism in contemporary times.

Our analysis also sheds light on how populist binaries in current Turkish politics have been historically referenced, and how the concept of 'the people' has been defined by populists. Through a critical examination of these factors, we will explore the emergence of Islamism as the thick ideology hosting populist politics in contemporary Muslim-majority countries.

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By the end of this chapter, readers will have a deeper understanding of the historical roots of Islamism in Turkey, the role of populism in shaping the political landscape, and how these factors continue to shape the country's politics today.

The Sultanate, the Caliphate, and Ottoman Islamism

During the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire faced increasing pressure from its Western provinces for territorial autonomy, as ethnic and religious groups sought to build their own nationalisms and establish stronger relationships with European countries. Nation-states were becoming a norm in the European continent, and the ethnic-religious groups in the Ottoman Empire were trying to develop their own nationalisms and build stronger relations with European countries. The 'nationalities question' grew to become one of the most important preoccupations of the Ottoman elite. Ottomanism was invented by this political elite as an 'ideology of modern political patriotism', in order to solve the 'nationalities question' and connect the peripheral provisions to the Ottoman centre (Çolak 2006, 589). Ottomanism intended to create a new political identity for Ottoman subjects as equal citizens of a unified Empire. It emphasized the idea of a common homeland to which all Ottomans belonged, and tried to eliminate differences by emphasizing 'modern patriotic citizenship and universal law' (Çolak 2006, 589). In a way, Ottomanism was 'designed to avoid the break-up of the Ottoman Empire' (Ongur 2015, 2). Ottomanism was an (Karpat 2000, 6). Ottomanism was an ostensibly secular ideology, given that it de-emphasized religious differences (especially those between Muslims and non-Muslims), and tried to establish 'a collective identity transcending all community-based identities grounded in religion' (Çolak 2006, 590).

However, Ottomanism failed to convince Ottoman Christians, who viewed the former as 'an ideology designed to perpetuate Muslim character of the state and to promote the Muslims' cause', to adopt an Ottoman identity (Karpat 2001, 12). Indeed, Ottomanism failed to create an ideological umbrella wide enough to embrace all Ottoman subjects. In the hands of the Young Ottomans, a group of intellectuals knowledgeable of European civilization and concerned about Ottoman disintegration, Ottomanism gained an increasingly 'Islamic' tone. As Serif Mardin (2000, 21) asserts, Young Ottomans'.

The failure of 'Ottomanism' and significant losses in the Western trenches of the Empire led the Ottoman elite to embrace an ideology of 'Ottoman Islamism' or simply, Islamism (Yilmaz 2008, 2011, 2021a; 2021b). The series of national uprisings in the Christian-dominated regions of the Balkans significantly altered the demographic landscape of the Ottoman Empire, resulting in a predominantly Muslim population in its remaining territories, as noted by Karpat (1997, 332–334). Hence, Ottomanism and Islamism came to converge and to coincide, despite the efforts of the government not to involve religious differences in its efforts to create a common citizenship. The focus of Islamism was on the Muslim subjects of the Empire, now formulated as an 'ummah'. It was after the establishment of Islamism, a modern ideology, as the official state ideology that the concept of 'ummah', understood as universal Muslim community', became the 'political foundation' of the Ottoman state (Karpat 2001, 12).

It was in this juncture that the Ottoman Sultanate was transformed to a Muslim Caliphate. Sultan Abdulhamid II gave himself the credentials of the 'Caliph', which allowed him to claim himself as the legitimate defender of Islam against foreign aggressors. As Kemal Karpat observes, 'Islamism/pan-Islamism had no parallel in Islamic history. It was a European-type movement of liberation and change, clad in Islamic garments and apparently led by the traditional head of the Muslim community, the caliph' (2001, 18). Sultan Abdulhamid used the office of Caliph both as an instrument of internal unity among Muslim subjects of the Empire and as an instrument to legitimize his reforms that granted him absolute power. In promoting pan-Islamist ideals, Sultan Abdulhamid's main goal was 'to bring to the Muslim Ottoman periphery a sense of its own unity with the center' (Mardin 2000, 305).

Islamism was not successful, however, in bringing together the remaining subjects of the Ottoman Empire under a single ideological umbrella. The failure of the Islamist project among the Arabs, proven by the latter's disregard for the Ottoman political goals and their support for the Western policies of dividing the Ottoman Empire, led to the significant criticism of the Islamist ideology and its eventual demise. This Islamism policy was later replaced by Turkification after 1908 under the guidance of the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), otherwise known as the Young Turks (Ülker 2005). The Young Turks implemented 'Turkification' as an alternative 'nation-building project' that was 'an attempt to create a Turkish national core at the heart of the imperial

conglomerate' (Ülker 2005, 631; Yilmaz 2013a, 2013b, 2015). This led to ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire, who were Muslim, to attempt to secede from the Empire, just as the non-Muslim religious groups began to defy the central government. These groups didn't feel Turkish and did not want to assimilate in that category, despite the fact that they were Muslim and loyal to the Ottoman Empire and the office of the Caliphate.

The evolution of Ottoman political ideologies in this period resulted in the ultimate victory of Turkish nationalism which led the Turkish War of Independence to its successful goal of creating a unified independent Turkish nation in 1923. However, neither Ottomanism nor Islamism died. Islamism, as will be discussed below, spread to other parts of the Muslim world and became a major ideology of anti-Western (and later anti-secular) struggle. Ottomanism was to be resurrected by the İslamists in Turkey as a guiding vision of imperial expansionism in the twenty-first century.

Resurrection of Ottomanism by the Islamists in Turkey

The reformist movement in the Muslim world paved the way for the emergence of various ideologies that sought to address the challenges posed by Western influence. In Turkey, the rise of Islamism in the late twentieth century led to the resurrection of Ottomanism as a response to the perceived failures of secularism.

Islamists in Turkey saw Ottomanism as a way to reassert the country's Muslim identity and to counter the influence of Western culture. The Ottoman Empire, with its legacy of Islamic governance and cultural heritage, was seen as a model that could be revived to address the perceived decline of Turkish society. This resurgence of Ottomanism was fuelled by a desire to reclaim Turkey's historical and cultural roots, and to reject the perceived Westernization of the country's political, social, and cultural spheres. By embracing the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, Islamists sought to create a new identity for Turkey that was rooted in Islamic values and traditions. However, this resurrection of Ottomanism was not without controversy. Critics argued that it was a backward-looking ideology that sought to impose a romanticized view of the past onto the present. They also raised concerns about the potential for Islamists to use Ottomanism as a means of consolidating their power and suppressing dissent. Despite these criticisms, the resurrection of Ottomanism continues to shape Turkish politics and society today. It

remains a powerful force in the country's political discourse, reflecting the ongoing tension between secularism and Islamism in Turkish society.

Islamism in Turkey has been inspired and shaped by ideas of Islamic reformism, which has come into existence in the early years of twentieth century as reaction to imperial European incursion into Muslim-majority geographies. Al-Afghani is regarded as the intellectual father of the Islamic reformism. His biggest contribution to the reformism was 'the formulation of the problem and the forceful identification of the solutions' (Badawi, 1). Afghani regarded European encroachment on the Muslim world as one of the biggest problems facing the Muslims. For Afghani, the British was the greatest 'menace' to Muslims, and he continuously called Muslims of the world to unite against this common enemy. Afghani's political ideas and his persistent call to fight against British imperialism made him a usual suspect of British security and intelligence departments (Kedourie 2007, 4). Therefore, Islamism has germinated as a reactionary political ideology to European colonial incursion.

Transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a Modern Republic

The story of modern Turkey is closely tied to the decline and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Suleyman the Magnificent's reign is largely regarded as the 'Golden Age' of the Ottoman Empire. According to an influential thesis promoted by Bernard Lewis and Harold Goben, the Ottoman decline began immediately after the death of Sultan Suleyman in the late sixteenth century. Ottomans could not recover from this all-encompassing stagnation and decline that started in the late sixteenth century. The eventual dissolution of the Empire in 1923 was followed. Lewis (1961, 23) argued that the first ten Sultans of the Ottomans were 'a series of able and intelligent men rare if not unique in the annals of dynastic succession'. However, they were later succeeded by a series 'of incompetents, degenerates, and misfits'. This degeneration at the top spread into other branches of the government. The bureaucracy lost its efficiency and effectiveness and succumbed into corruption and dysfunction. In the economic front, the Ottomans lost the Atlantic and Mediterranean trade to the Europeans and could not keep up with the industrial advances of the West. Their closed-mindedness and blind rejection of European technology brought their eventual decline in the

military field. This thesis found its followers among the secular strata of the Turkish society as well.

This decline thesis has been criticized and discredited by recent scholarship. Darling (1997) and Grant (1999) argued that the Ottoman reform efforts started as early as the seventeenth century during the reign of Osman II. These reforms were initiated following serious military and political crises, most importantly military defeats at the hands of the Europeans. These reforms recuperated Ottoman economy, so much so that by the end of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman economy was in surplus. In the eighteenth century, however, European powers, especially Austria and Russia, started to intervene aggressively into domestic affairs of the Ottomans, instigating rebellions by non-Muslim subjects of the Empire located in Eastern Europe and northeastern Anatolia. This was later coupled with the rise of local notables, sometimes bandits, who rose to prominence due to decreasing power of the central government. When Sultan Mustafa II tried to 'overturn this trend and reconcentrate power in his own hands' in the early eighteenth century, he was unsuccessful (Quataert 2005, 43).

Nevertheless, as Jane Hathaway (2004) and Linda Darling (1997) show, the Ottoman Empire tried to incorporate latest technological advances in the military domain into its practices during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, although it is certainly true that they remained largely resistant to reforms in political, economic, and educational realms. Conservative reactionaries also played important role in curtailing reform efforts, signified in the toppling of Selim III, who initiated the most comprehensive Ottoman reform effort up to that time in the late eighteenth century, called 'Nizam-i Cedid' (New Order). Selim's reforms 'aimed to increase the strength of the central state organization, against external enemies (mainly Russia) and internal ones (the semi-independent *ayan*)' (Zürcher, 2004, 21). While 'Selim felt sufficiently sure of his standing and popularity and in the capital to resume his policies of westernization', this proved to be 'a grave miscalculation', as there was an increasing criticism of his francophone outlook and reforms among the ulama and the Janissaries (Palmer 2011, 70–72). The Janissaries were particularly opposed to Selim's efforts to overhaul the military and creation of a new army (Hanioğlu 2010, 44). Selim's new army was much more capable than the Janissaries in the battlefield; however, Selim failed to destroy the Janissary corps which cost him dearly in the end (Hanioğlu 2010, 45).

Whatever the reasons behind its decline, it should be noted that Ottoman reform efforts continued into the early nineteenth century. For example, Sultan Mahmud II reconstructed the army in order to make it powerful enough to preserve the Empire (Levy 1982). Mahmud imported European military advisors, most importantly Helmuth von Moltke from Germany, who helped him to establish a new army that was loyal to him. As Levy (1982, 244) argued, 'in 1826 Sultan Mahmud II was able to revive the New Order Army under a different name'. In a way, it can be argued that the entire Ottoman reform efforts in this period emanated from the main objective of strengthening the army and centralizing power in the hands of the Sultan. Reforms in higher education were geared towards training military officers in modern schools. Doctors, teachers, and surgeons were trained in these schools to better serve military objectives. Rather than 'the foundations of new modes of thought', these Ottoman reform efforts 'had in reality a more modest goal, namely to assure the survival of the state against external and internal challenges' (Karpat 1972, 245).

From the early nineteenth century on, the main tenet of the Ottoman reform efforts was the centralization of political and military authority in the hands of the Sultan. To achieve this goal, Ottoman Sultans began to attack alternative centres of power. Mahmud II crippled financial power of independent ulama by creating a new directorate of religious/charitable endowments (awkaf) and created a new Supreme Council as the main legislative body. These new institutions were directly under the control of the Sultan. While ostensibly aimed at increasing rights of Ottoman subjects, particularly the non-Muslims, the later 'Tanzimat' reforms were indeed a continuation of this policy whereby the Sultans carved out ever-growing political powers for themselves. Moreover, as Roderic Davison (1973) showed, the Ottoman reorganization of the millet system in 1860–1865 failed to create a stronger sense of belonging among the non-Muslim subjects and actually retained the separatist tendencies of the old millet system. Instead, European Enlightenment ideas were introduced into the Ottoman Empire through a small circle of educated and ambitious activists called Young Ottomans (see Mardin 2000).

Moreover, by the late nineteenth century, nation-states were becoming more prominent in Europe and beyond. This new wave of political order was not addressed by the Porte, and the various ethnic groups living under the Ottoman Empire started to agitate for national independence.

The nation-state became the new norm in the realm of international relations. However, Ottoman policy makers were still trying to hold the Empire together, and many attempts were made to preserve Ottoman power, by including the Young Turks and the Young Ottomans. As Turkish nationalism started to rise, it became a wake-up call for other ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire. They saw it as a clear sign—if they wanted to stay, they might have to embrace Turkish nationalism. Not keen on losing their unique identities, these non-Turkish Ottomans began to stand up for their own nationhood, asserting their distinct national identities.

Mustafa Kemal and the Establishment of the Modern Turkey

Although Turkey's modern history starts in 1923, the events which took place in the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century played crucial role in shaping the social, political, and ideological framework of the Turkish Republic. The Ottoman Empire was embroiled in continuous attempts at national independence by its Christian subjects beginning in the early nineteenth century. The Ottoman leadership tried to curb this rising tide through ideological interventions which saw the invention, first, of Ottomanism, then Islamism, and finally Turkism. Neither of the first two ideologies were effective in hindering the process of İmperial decay. Turkism, the final ideological resort of the Empire elite, was only effective insofar as it rallied the Istanbul elite and helped the state maintain Turkish control of the Anatolian heartland.

Another important **contextual fact** to keep in mind is that Turkey's emergence as an independent nation was marred by major battles against Western imperial nations, most importantly the Great Britain, France, and İtaly. The Ottoman Empire joined World War 1 as part of the Central Powers and experienced devastating losses which ended with the partitioning of the remains of the Ottoman Empire. The Sevres Treaty, signed between some of the last dignitaries of the Ottoman Empire and the European powers, reduced the post-Ottoman Turkey to a minor rump in Central Anatolia. This treaty was later annulled thanks to the efforts of the Turkish Independence movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who oversaw the establishment of the modern Turkish state in 1923. Nonetheless, the memories of the **invasion by the Western forces** and the devastation in the hands of the Ottoman elite that was loyal to

the Sultan at the time would not be lost on the Turkish elite, which went on to establish the Turkish Republic as a secular, independent, unitary republic under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

As a member of the educated class, Mustafa Kemal Pasha (who had joined the CUP in 1907 and supported the revolution that toppled Sultan Abdulhamid II) reflected the key characteristics of his environment. He emerged as the leader of the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1922) after the Ottoman Empire was defeated by the Allied Powers, and when much of the Anatolia, including the capital Istanbul, was occupied. In order to pursue a successful War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal forged a broad alliance that was constituted of local notables, communists, ex-Unionists, military leaders, clergy, the masses, and the Muslim ethnic groups (Oran 1999, 196). As a leader of this coalition, Ataturk managed to unite the current territory of Turkey following the War of Independence.

Following the establishment of independent Turkish Republic in 1923, Kemal started a vast project that left almost no aspect of social, political, economic, and cultural life in Turkey untouched (Yilmaz 2005, 2015, 2016). He abolished the caliphate, eliminated religious institutions such as religious laws, courts, schools, and dervish lodges, and introduced a United Education system that put all educational activities in the Republic under the command of the central government. Under his leadership, the country adopted the Italian Criminal Code, the German Commercial Code, and the Swiss Civil Code, signalling a complete break from Turkish and Islamic traditions, rejecting even a synthetic mixing of local and Western ideas (Yilmaz 2005). Mustafa Kemal did not want Turkey to be a 'Middle East' nation. Instead, he imagined the new republic as a European country and intended to Europeanize it by any means necessary.

Kemalist Ideology

Mustafa Kemal formed the new Republic's ideology around his personal ideas and charisma. His unique mixture of Turkish nationalism, a particular understanding of Sunni Islam, and a modified form of French laicism became known as Kemalism (Hurd 2008, 66). Kemalism became the official doctrine of the Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal was presented as the father of the nation, its saviour, and teacher. He adopted two names: Gazi (war veteran) and Ataturk (the father of Turkey). Kemalism discriminated

against practicing Muslims, Kurds, Alevis, and non-Muslims based on his notions of secularism and nationalism, and aimed at homogenizing its people into a single identity group (Yilmaz 2013a, b, 2015).

Kemalism was an **authoritarian ideology** that not only did not embrace liberal-democratic ideals, but in fact considered them to be an existential threat to the unity of Turkish nation and integrity of the state. There were several important reasons behind Kemal's decision to rule as an authoritarian leader. First of all, Mustafa Kemal—and Kemalism in general—inherited the secular and authoritarian traditions of the Committee of Union and Progress. The CUP was a secret society of secularist intellectuals during the late Ottoman period. The organization followed an authoritarian statist and positivistic ideology that did not respect the rights of minorities and religious Muslims. Moreover, the Kemalists had a deeply internalized fear of territorial partition which was referred to as the "Sèvres Complex". The 'complex' was a symptom of a toxic mentality that viewed every manifestation of pluralism as constituting a clear and imminent threat to the nation-state. This was, in part, a product of the Kemalists' desire for a state that exercised strong control and commanded uncontested loyalty, but it was also an impulse confirmed against a backdrop of a plethora of ethnic and religious identities breaking off one by one from the Ottoman Empire as it collapsed. Over the decades, Turkey's Sevres Complex has deepened to become a Sevres Syndrome (Yilmaz and Barry 2018).

Kemalism's understanding of **secularism** was radical in its scope and ambition. It envisaged the complete secularization of not only political and economic spheres, but all aspects of social life. Islam was considered incompatible with modern civilization and most often portrayed by the Kemalist state as a force preventing Turkey from developing into a wealthy and civilized nation. Public manifestations of religiosity were therefore banned. Religious titles, dresses, Arabic prayers, and Qur'anic courses were also prohibited. Turkey adopted the Latin alphabet in exchange for the Arabic alphabet and made it mandatory for all men to wear Western-style hats rather than fez and turban. Almost half of the mosques were destroyed, sold, or closed (Esen 2011, 145). According to the Kemalists, Turkey's destiny was to become a European country, not a Middle Eastern one, and Islam represented one of the key obstacles to becoming European.

Rather than disconnecting itself from religious affairs, Kemalism embarked on an ambitious mission to **reform Islam in order** to make

it amenable to the goals of the secular nationalist state. It created the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA, Diyanet) and placed all mosques in the country under its jurisdiction. Through the Diyanet, the state strictly controlled Islam by monopolistically managing the mosques and religious instruction, employing all imams and authoring religious texts from Friday sermons to Qur'anic commentaries (Yilmaz et al. 2021). Islam was not disestablished; rather, it was differently established (Davison 2003, 341; Yilmaz and Barry 2018; Yilmaz 2005, 2013a, b, 2015, 2016).

Kemalism's Westernizing stance was complex. On the one hand, Kemalists enthusiastically embraced many aspects of Western civilization, but on the other hand, they lived in constant fear that the Western powers sought to divide and conquer Turkey. The Kemalists firmly believed that behind the Islamic dissidents, leftists, socialists, communists, Kurds, and Alevis, there was always at least one Western state, if not several, working to destroy the Republic (Hurd 2008, 66). Similarly, the Kemalists saw minority groups as susceptible to being deceived by "external forces", which were always waiting to divide the nation by exploiting their weaknesses.

The Kemalist nation-building project in Turkey was a revolutionary effort to engineer society and create a new type of citizen. This project was envisioned as a strong centralized public bureaucracy that would penetrate the periphery to shape the 'Republican man' or the 'good citizen'. As a result, the Kemalists were able to raise generations of a Kemalist hegemonic elite dubbed Homo LASTus by Ihsan Yilmaz, which comprised military and civilian bureaucrats, writers, teachers, doctors, white-collar workers, businessmen, media personalities, artists, intelligentsia, and academics (Yilmaz 2013a, b, 22).

Homo LASTus represents the 'desired citizen' concept of the modern Turkish nation-state, reflecting the principal citizenship project aimed at creating a citizenry who fervently respect the nation-state. The state sought to socially engineer individuals who embodied the characteristics of being Laicist, Ataturkist, Sunni Muslim, and Turk (LAST). LAST was the Turkish Republic's version of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) (Yilmaz, 2013a, b). The Turkish bureaucracy was dominated by Kemalist citizens, and businesses aligned with the Kemalist ideology were favoured for government tenders. Moreover, bureaucratic appointments, military and diplomatic careers, and white-collar professions were largely reserved for members of the Homo LASTus group.

In the beginning, these schemes proved successful, with early Kemalists being idealistic and working tirelessly to uphold Kemalist ideals (Zürcher 2004, 181). However, as time passed, the Kemalist project began to face challenges. Critics argued that it was a top-down approach that imposed an artificial identity on individuals and suppressed their freedom of expression. The emergence of Islamist movements in Turkey challenged the Kemalist hegemony and exposed the limitations of the Homo LASTus citizen concept. As a result, Turkey's political landscape has become increasingly diverse and complex, reflecting the ongoing tension between different ideologies and visions for the future of the country.

Kemalism and Democracy in Early Republican Turkey

For the Kemalist elites, democracy did not entail representation of the interests of diverse social groups. Instead, it involved selecting the best policy from the ideas put forward by Kemalists themselves (Heper 1991, 49). According to Kemalists, the public sphere was a space that could be controlled for free debate, with the parameters of freedom defined by Kemalists themselves. In Turkey, public debate was thus designed to reinforce and perpetuate the Kemalist worldview (Dressler 2010, 130). This approach led to the development of a state without a politically influential civil society (Heper 1991, 47). The consequence of this process was the fusion of party and state, which began in 1931 and was completed by 1936, as well as the eradication of civil society organizations (from Turkish Hearts to Freemason lodges).

On of the main objectives of the Kemalist state was the establishment of an homogenous nation, which was achieved through the promotion of an extreme form of nationalism that aimed to erase differences among the population. The state's desire to create a uniform Turkish identity was similar to that of the CUP, which sought to homogenize all ethnic and religious groups in the Ottoman Empire under the banner of Turkishness. The construction of self-serving historical myths and the rewriting of history were among the key strategies employed to achieve this goal, which aimed to replace religion with a new national identity (Zürcher 2004, 181–182). Intolerance towards differences was thus a defining feature of the Kemalist mindset, which aimed to create a uniform and homogeneous nation-state.

As part of the state's homogenizing project, social, religious, ethnic, and ideological identity issues were securitized. The Kemalist's homogenization process was materialized through the bureaucratic organs of the state. Powerful organs of the state, among the most important of which were the military and judiciary, were used to constrain groups that the Kemalists considered a threat to their power (Dressler 2010, 122). Criticism of Kemalism was considered opposition to the state itself. Thus, during this period, any semblance of criticism towards government policies might be regarded as a threat or a separatist action that required suppression through the coercive power of the state for the protection of its power. The Kemalist hegemonic elite were constantly fearful of "Islamic reactionary", "Kurdish separatist", and "communist" threats. As a result, the Kemalist hegemonic elite regarded military-bureaucratic tutelage as the most effective way of tackling these threats (Kuru 2012, 38). Kemalism, therefore, required a high degree of state securitization to succeed and necessitated the division of the Turkish people into a dichotomy of either "with us" or "against us" (Shipoli 2018). This securitization has continued for nearly a century, with the Turkish government continuing to suppress political dissent and opposition in various regions, including the Kurdish region in the southeast (Birdisli 2014; Demir 2019; Yilmaz et al. 2023).

Mustafa Kemal viewed his party as an institution "representing the entire Turkish people and the general interests of the nation" (Hanioğlu 2011, 184). Therefore, if as a Turkish citizen you disagreed with his party, you disagreed with the Turkish people and the national interest. In Mustafa Kemal's lifetime, only his Republican People's Party (CHP) 'competed' at the elections, the purpose of which was to rubberstamp the candidates chosen by Kemal himself (Zürcher 1993, 177). Kemalism was also populist. As a matter of fact, one of the six fundamental principles of Kemalism (Six Arrows) is populism. Mustafa Kemal also misused the concept of 'national will' and in typically populist style portrayed himself as an instrument of the national will and dismissed his critics as traitors (Parla 2008, 90–91; Akyol 2012, 67–95). Kemal considered populism to be both necessary in establishing the legitimacy of his regime, but also the method by which he would force a "socioeconomic transformation" in Turkey, and ultimately "realize a truly populist system" (Kili, 1980, 389). The other five arrows of Kemalism are: Republicanism, Secularism, Reformism, Nationalism, and Statism. These six are the arrows that officially led CHP and they are imbedded in the party's logo.

The New Republic and State of Islamism During the Cold War

In the late 1940s, the Kemalist single-party regime that had ruled Turkey since 1923 had become widely unpopular among the Turkish population. Inflation, state repression, and the regime's inability to address poverty were major factors contributing to this dissatisfaction. Additionally, with the end of World War II, democracy and freedom became popular ideals, as the defeat of fascist and authoritarian regimes marked a victory for liberal, pluralistic, and capitalist democracy. The United States emerged as the dominant world power and its model of democracy deeply impressed many in Turkey. Meanwhile, Turkey's relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated, with the Soviets making territorial demands on Turkey and pressuring for the establishment of a joint Turkish-Russian defence force in the Bosporus and Dardanelles areas. Turkey sought alliances and applied to join the United Nations, but was met with demands for a democratic, multi-party political system by the West. Kemalists believed that aligning closely with American ideals of democracy and free enterprise would help Turkey benefit from American political, military, and economic support (Zürcher 2004, 208).

In response to domestic and international pressures, the Kemalists were compelled to adopt a more democratic approach in Turkey. The parliamentary elections in 1946 were manipulated to secure a victory for the Republican People's Party (CHP). In the first free and fair elections in Turkish history in 1950, however, the centre-right Democratic Party (DP) emerged as the victor, having earlier been established by a group of politicians who had broken away from the CHP. The DP initiated extensive economic and political reforms that liberalized the Turkish economy, improved the living standards of Turkish citizens, and brought the country closer to the West.

During the DP period, Turkey's admission to NATO, making it the first Muslim-majority country to join the organization, was a pivotal moment. Turkey's membership in NATO not only made it an integral part of the Cold War struggle but also helped replicate the Cold War mentality within the country. The following discussion will delve into Turkey's party politics and civil-military relations during the 1950s.

After being voted out of power for the first time in its history, the CHP had to struggle with Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and his DP "in the arena of public opinion". The CHP had a strong support among the press and the intelligentsia. The CHP also "succeeded in increasing"

its "appeal among the educated elite, the vast majority of whom were city dwellers". However, CHP "soon realized that it was much more difficult to reach the periphery, where most Turks lived" (Pelt 2014, 84). This was partly because, during his rule, Menderes "functioned as a symbol of hope in the eyes those who wanted Islam to play a greater role in the direction of national politics" (Pelt 2014, 85). Moreover, the "DP's relaxation of the one-party era's militant anti-religious prohibition" paved the way of a kind of religious revival (Pelt 2014, 80–83). Eventually, in tandem with waves of migration from rural areas to big cities for the first time in decades, the rather static and predictable politics of Turkey's cities began to change and evolve.

On the other hand, especially after winning its third term in power in 1957, the DP largely lost its democratic credentials and started attacking the opposition CHP, blocking the latter's propaganda efforts and inciting public hatred. By 1960, the DP government had already become authoritarian, polarizing Turkish society and creating significant opposition within the Turkish military forces against itself. This led in 1960 to the first-ever military coup d'etat in Turkish Republican history, which resulted in the toppling of the DP government by Turkish Military Forces. The *coupists* hanged the prime minister and many of his closest associates (Pelt 2014). This established a precedent for, military **coups** and interventions in Turkey.

The 1960 coup led to the emergence of military tutelage in the Turkish political system, a phenomenon that has since dominated civilian politics. After the first coup in 1960, the military made interventions into Turkish politics in 1971, 1980, 1997, 2007, and 2016, each time for the purpose of removing, or at least hindering the rule, of elected governments. It has been speculated that in all interventions except for the last one, the military was guided by Kemalist principles of secularism (laiklik) and nationalism. Another general characteristic of the military coups in Turkey was that in all coups that successfully toppled the elected governments (1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997), the military eventually returned power to civilian politicians, refusing to directly rule the country for a prolonged period. The Turkish military never wanted to rule from in front, never wished for direct contact with the people, and never attempted to win elections.

By the mid-1960s, the Turkish political scene changed through increased liberalization, as well as through **the growth of leftist ideologies**. The latter manifested themselves in communist or proto-communist

groups that strove to establish a socialist regime in Turkey similar to the Soviet model. The new radicalized youth and labour organizations also opposed Turkey's membership in Western military alliances such as NATO. By the 1970s this shifted the priorities and points of emphasis of both the army and the Kemalist states. Prior to the Cold War, the Kemalist state had targeted Islamic and Kurdish tendencies as direct threats to national security and tried to eliminate them at all costs. However, with the advent of the Cold War politics, the radical left in the form of communism emerged as a significant threat to the military tutelage, which forced the latter to lean closer to the conservative national forces. It was also in this period that the first Islamist parties emerged in Turkey in the 1970s (Kuru 2012; Yilmaz and Albayrak 2022).

The emergence of Islamist parties in Turkey led to increased clashes between leftist and rightist groups, each striving for influence over the state. Despite attempts to remain neutral, the Kemalist regime was unable to control or align itself with either side, ultimately leading to a military intervention in the form of the 1980 coup d'état. Under the leadership of General Kenan Evren, the coup resulted in a brutal crackdown on political groups from both the left and right, with many being imprisoned, oppressed, and disappearing without explanation. The new regime established a new Constitution in 1982, albeit in an unfree and unfair referendum characterized by an open vote and closed count (Özbudun 2011: 41).

The 1980 coup created 'the opportunity for military tutelage institutionalized through the strengthening of the political powers of the [military led and controlled] National Security Council' (Insel 2003, 294). The new coup regime put the state at the centre of Turkish politics. It banned all political parties, shut down more than 600 civil society organizations, arrested 500,000 people, and killed hundreds in prisons. The coup regime also established a notorious characteristic of Turkish politics: banning people from politics. The latter was later used by the Kemalist regime many times when its interests clashed with opposition political actors. Hence, the coup regime prioritized unity and stability over diversity and liberty, and established an authoritarian regime that could not be transcended by party politics even when it was subjected to free and fair elections and democratization reforms.

The Emergence of Opportune Spaces for Islamist Propaganda

After the 1980 coup, the Kemalist military leadership adopted a more accommodating approach towards Islam. The term Kemalism was replaced by Ataturkism, which represented essentially the same ideology but with less hostility towards Islam. The concept of Turkish-Islamic synthesis was promoted, which aimed to unify the Turkish Muslim nation under the authority of the state and a Turkish version of Islam, viewed as a counter to rising leftist activism. During this period, Mustafa Kemal was rebranded as a pious Muslim (Saleem 2017, 104). Ataturkism became an ideology associated with the educated urban class and intellectuals, while Turkish-Islamic synthesis gained popularity among the subaltern masses (Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu 2009, 10).

Alongside the oppression of practicing Muslims and other religious groups, particularly those outside state control, by the regime of Kenan Evren, the regime also introduced a 'religious course' into high school curriculums. The military regime aimed to promote the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, making Sunni religious education a constitutional obligation. State-funded construction of mosques became widespread throughout the country, even in villages where Alevis, who generally preferred Cemevi over mosques, resided (Yilmaz and Barry 2020; Grigoriadis 2009, 1197). Additionally, the coup regime publicly embraced Islamic ideas and practices. For instance, Evren, as head of state, spoke positively about Islamic issues and even undertook an umrah pilgrimage to Mecca (an optional pilgrimage at any time in addition to the obligatory hajj pilgrimage during the set month). During his rule, Turkey also became an active member of the Islamic Cooperation Organization (ICO).

The form of Islam that was officially approved and propagated by the military leadership was a hybrid construction combining Turkish nationalism and Sunni Islam. This hybrid construction (Turkish-Islam Synthesis), which articulated that Islam and Turkish nationalism were inextricably linked to the Turkish culture, included ideas such as Islam having a special appeal to Turks and sharing a lot in common with the culture of the Central Asian Turks. Therefore, it was the Turkish people's destiny and mission to be prominent 'soldiers of Islam' (Zurcher and van der Linden 2004, 108–109). The new political regulations became more flexible by giving more space to Diyanet; even so, the "importance of secularism and Ataturk's reforms were highlighted" (Saleem 2017, 102).

The Turkish-Islamic synthesis was designed as a project aimed at **state-controlled Islamization** (Sunnification) of society in an attempt to counterbalance the socialists, leftists, and Kurdish separatists (Saleem 2017, 352). As will be discussed shortly, this state-led Islamization process helped expand the power of Islamic groups in Turkey, be it civil movements such as Gulen and Nurcu or political groups such as Milli Gorus. As a result, even Islamic groups that opposed the Evren regime would wholeheartedly argue for the Turkish-Islam synthesis. Kenan Evren had said that the effects of his coup would be felt for a thousand years, and although this was hyperbole, it has to be acknowledged that his legacy lives on today. The Islamic groups in Turkey have all imbedded ideas of the sacredness of the Turkish state, the Turkish nation, and the sacred call for the Turks to represent and save the ummah. Independently of how different these groups might be from each other, they all share these three beliefs as the 'additional pillars of Islam', following the five main pillars of Islam.

Islamism Under the Kemalist Rule

The political Islamists in Turkey grew out of the centre-right parties of the 1950s and the 1960s. The Islamists were not happy with the centre-right's support for secularism and wanted these parties to move decisively against secularism and towards a more Islamic political stance. When they were unable to sway the centre-right parties, they decided to part ways with them and establish their own political parties that would promote İslamic ideals and oppose secular policies.

Intellectual Fathers of Islamism in Turkey

'Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903–1979) was one of the most influential Islamic thinkers and activists of the twentieth century. As Vali Reza Nasr (1996, 3) contends, Mawdudi 'was one of the first Islamic thinkers to develop a systematic political reading of Islam and a plan for social action to realize his vision'. Mawdudi literally introduced, or perhaps invented, some of the most famous concepts in today's Islamist lexicon, such as 'Islamic ideology', 'Islamic constitution', 'Islamic politics', and even 'Islamic movement' (Ahmad 1991, 464). Mawdudi's influence on the Islamic world transcended geographical, sectarian, andor racial bounds. He influenced Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Banna as much

as he did Ayatollah Khomeini. While he himself established and led the Islamist movement, the Jamaat-I Islami ('the Jamaat'), various other movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Turkish Islamist National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi - MGH) have been heavily influenced by his thought (Yilmaz 2000, 2008, 2009).

Born in Aurangabad, colonial India in 1903, Mawdudi was an Islamic scholar, journalist, activist, thinker, and a Muslim revivalist. His Islamic thought dramatically differed from the other prominent Muslim ideologues of the time in India. He rejected the modernism of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and apologetic ideas of Sayyid Amir Ali. Mawdudi proclaimed that he did not apologize for Islam, nor did he try to modernize it. He believed, he said, in Islam as the final and true path and 'sought to make Islam supreme in the social and political life of the Umma' (Ahmad 1991, 464).

Mawdudi insisted on what he claimed to be 'intellectual independence', by which he meant 'an Islam that was pure, that was unsullied by external cultural influences' (Jackson 2010, 89; see also, Nasr 1996, 50). For him, Islam had its own completely independent and unique –ism, Islamism, which was divorced from the influences of all other –isms such as Hinduism, Marxism, secularism, and capitalism.

The idea that state and religion are fused into one entity with no distinction between each other (hence, Islamic state) is a 'distinctly modern development' with no historical precedent or a theological basis in Islam (Ahmad 2010, 148). The state became central to Islamism and Islamists such as Mawdudi, not because it was theologically entailed in Islam but rather despite it. It did so because of the configuration of the early twentieth-century socio-political formations under which the state as an institution had acquired an unprecedented role in expanding its realm of action and the scope of its penetration' (Ahmad 2010, 149).

Another important name influencing Islamism in Turkey was from Egypt, Sayyid Qutb, the most influential **ideologue** of *Jam'iyyat al-Ikhvan al-Muslimin* (the Muslim Brotherhood - MB). Qutb's key contribution to the Islamist thought was his shift of emphasis from the enemy outside (the West) to the one inside, mainly the secular, un-Islamic political regimes ruling Muslim lands at the time. As Calvert mentions, while Qutb **condemned Western hegemony** over Muslim lands, 'he urged Muslims to confront what he regarded as the corrupt cultural and political foundations of their own countries' (Calvert 2013, 1). This, Qutb asserted, amounted to jahiliyyah, or ignorance and barbarism, borrowing

the Quranic term used to refer to the spiritual darkness of pre-Islamic Arabia. The context of authoritarian secular national leadership in Egypt has had clear influences on shaping Qutb's views of internal enemies.

In Turkey, the intellectual emergence and shaping of Islamism have been significantly influenced by the ideas of intellectuals like Mawdudi and Qutb, who had first-hand experience with colonialism. Thus, though Turkey has never been colonized physically, Islamism and Islamists in Turkey have grown as reaction to an imagined/hypothetical colonization of the country by the secularist internal 'collaborators' of the anti-Islam imperial European forces.

Emergence of Islamist Parties in Turkey

Under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, Turkish Islamists started to establish political parties that would become coalition partners in the 1970s. Despite membership in coalitions in the 1970s, Erbakan's parties remained electorally small until the 1980s (Poulton 1999, 19). The National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP) was established in January 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan and his friends. The party espoused a new economic and social order based on 'national' *(milli*) as opposed to 'Western' principles. The words '*milli*' and '*millet*" (nation) were ambiguously used by Erbakan to refer to the Ummah (global Islamic community) as well. This probably emanated from the Ottoman usage of the *millet* whereby they referred to religious denominations as *millets*, and Muslim Ottomans were one of the *millets*.

Erbakan's party drew support from **small and medium-sized businesses** in conservative Anatolian towns. These businesses already had organic links with Islamic religious groups, Sufi orders, and communities. The MNP represented the interests of these small and medium-sized businesses (Sunar and Toprak 1983, 438; Gulalp 1999, 29). The intellectual and industrial ties that Erbakan established with these Anatolian businesses led to the emergence of an interesting mix. The ideological result was that the National Outlook opposed not to capitalism, but rather to Western capitalism. The difference between them was explained through an under-defined but frequently invoked concept: A Just Order (Yıldız 2003, 189).

The party was shut down after a military intervention in 1971, on the grounds that it was opposed to secularism. The National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP) was established in October 1972. In the

beginning, MSP ideology was virtually identical with that of the MNP, but at the end of the decade the party had a more religious style of rhetoric compared to other parties of the National Outlook, which could be a product of the radicalization of Islamist movements after the Iranian Revolution (Tuğal 2009, 44). The MSP argued that Turkish society had become fragmented as a result of Westernization. Erbakan repeatedly condemned Europe. Instead of continuing to pursue the orientation towards Europe that started several centuries ago in Ottoman times, he argued that Turkey must get closer to its Muslim neighbours to form an 'Islamic common market' (Poulton 1999, 22; Ahmad 2017, 161). Erbakan foresaw a strong Turkey, a leader in the Muslim world, adopting the Islamic dinar as a common currency and developing through the Anatolian heavy industry. He called for the creation of an economy based on Islamic values such as interest-free banking. He also advocated establishment of a military alliance among the Muslim nations. These claims are well and alive among the Turkish Islamists even today.

In the polarized context of the 1970s, the MSP provided an anti-communist, anti-Zionist, and anti-Westernist stance. This rhetoric drew support from the underdeveloped Kurdish and Central-Eastern Anatolian regions, and especially from the merchants who were disadvantaged in their competition with bigger capitalists. The same discourse would later be used by Erdogan to claim his leadership in the Umma and the need for chancing the parliamentarian system of Turkish politics into a presidential system.

The MSP was among the parties shut down by the state after the 1980 coup. In its place, Turkish Islamists established the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP). The RP was not ostensibly radical, but it had radical ideas and links. Similar to the previous parties of the National Outlook, the RP, too, perceived laicism as the crux of all problems in Turkey. It also denounced the Westernization and the EU accession process (Findley 2010, 361). İn this, the İslamist discourses **challenged the Kemalist core ideas** of Western ideational direction and secularist mindset. The İslamists refused to acknowledge the Kemalist reforms in education, social life, bureaucracy, and foreign policy and demanded a return to the Ottoman era where İslam was the main ideological element shaping social and political life. The İslamist ideas also clashed with other religious actors such as Nursi and Gulen, who did not use anti-Western and anti-European discourse (Esposito and Yilmaz 2010a, 2010b, 2012, Yilmaz et al. 2007a, 2007b).

In the 1980s, opportunities emerged for openness in public **expression of religious ideas** and groups in Turkey thanks to the coup regime's materialization of the Turkish-İslam Synthesis and Prime Minister Turgut Ozal's liberalization programme. A new generation of university-educated Islamic intellectuals emerged in this period. As a result, the RP of Erbakan was able to break out of its electoral prison and started to become a mass party, attracting votes of people who used to vote for centre-right parties. In 1994, it captured the mayoralties of Ankara and Istanbul and became the largest party in the December 1995 elections, with Erbakan becoming the prime minister of a coalition government (Poulton 1999, 19). The Turkish Islamists found a way to reach to the mainstream Anatolian Muslims and make a coalition that would get them the prime ministry, for the first time. But while one would expect that they learned a lesson about being more inclusive, their exclusive discourse did not change. While in power they still applied the same old conspiracy-driven discourse against the West, the secularists, and other groups who did not fit their ideology. This was a real opportunity for the National Outlook to embrace a larger portion of the population, but they failed to grasp. Focusing on National Outlook Movement and its historical roots in Naqsbandism, Erturk (2022) argues that "political participation has neither 'democratised' nor 'moderated' these parties and their radical Islamist thoughts".

Milli Görüş Movement established another party, the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP). However, the Constitutional Court was going to ban that new party in 2001. From that point on, the grassroots of the Milli Göruş Movement largely joined the newly established, and this helped AKP win government in the 2002 elections. In the beginning, the Milli Göruş mindset was on the margin of the AKP's official discourse (Yilmaz 2000, 2008, 2009, 2011). AKP's leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was the mayor of Istanbul from the Milli Gorus Movement, claimed that they have taken off the "Milli Göruş shirt" and that they were now on the path to democracy and the European Union. In just 18 months after rising to power, the February 28, 1997, coup forced Erbakan to resign. This led to the shutdown of the RP. Reacting to these events, the Milli Görüş Movement formed the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP), which was, however, destined for a ban by the Constitutional Court in 2001. Subsequently, the Milli Görüş Movement's grassroots largely shifted their support to the newly formed Justice and Development Party (AKP), significantly contributing to its victory in the 2002 elections. Initially, the Milli Görüş

ideology remained a fringe element within the AKP's official discourse (Yilmaz 2000, 2008, 2009, 2011).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has briefly traced the complex and multifaceted relationship between religion, democracy, identity politics, and populism in Turkey. We began by examining the decline and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and how the Turkish Republic was established with a top-down social engineering project of enforced secularization. However, religion remained vital in the daily lives of millions of Turkish citizens, particularly those who did not possess an elite education or who lived far from its major cities.

The establishment of a pluralist democracy in Turkey in the aftermath of the Cold War was compromised from the outset as the military and Kemalist elite remained in power behind the scenes and staged coups whenever their power was threatened by democratic politics, or by Islamism or communism. The authoritarian and secular nature of the Kemalist regime made them constantly fearful of the growing Islamic movements, which were often banned but went underground and achieved a wider role in society.

Civil Islamic groups sought to educate the people in what they believed to be the true path of Islam and pursued co-existence with other religions and different forms of Islam. However, the Islamists attacked pluralism and fomented public demand for an exclusivist Islamist state. Over time, and influenced by wider radicalization of Muslims and the growth of Muslim identity politics, Islamism became more attractive to a significant portion of religiously observant Turkish citizens who began to increasingly reject secularism. At the same time many Turks, particularly among the younger and better educated, turned away from institutionalised religion, following a pattern seen in Iran where increasing numbers of citizens reject in disgust the instrumentalisation of Islam by a corrupt and self-serving elite.

The relationship between religion and democracy in Turkey is very much contested and continues to evolve. It is a subject of ongoing debate and analysis in both Turkey and the wider world, as it provides a case study for the complex interplay between religion, politics, and democracy in Muslim-majority countries.

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CHAPTER 4

Indonesia's Journey to Independence and the Evolution of Political Islam: A Historical Perspective

Islam's Journey in Indonesia

The Islamization of Indonesia transpired through two primary processes (Ricklefs 2008). First, port cities across the archipelago and the Malay peninsula, such as the key trade hub of Malacca, locals encountered Muslims from Mughal India and other Islamic territories, generally working as traders, converting to Islam as a result of trade opportunities and associated social networks, as well as lay missionary endeavours. Second, small but influential groups of Muslims from the Indian subcontinent and Yemen the settled in Indonesia, intermingling with the local population to form Muslim communities. Travel logs from the late thirteenth century reveal that rulers in Samudera Pasai, located in northwestern Sumatra, were observant Muslims adhering to the Shafii school of Islamic jurisprudence. As Houben (2003, 153) asserts, Islam spread across insular Southeast Asia "like a slow, giant wave", beginning in northern Sumatra around the thirteenth century and reaching Borneo and the southern Philippines by the sixteenth century A.D. Additionally, the Muslim Chinese explorer and diplomat Zheng He, who conducted expeditionary voyages to Java and the Malay Peninsula, is credited with contributing to establishing Chinese Muslim communities in these areas. Zheng He and his community followed the Hanafi school, led by Hajji an Ying Yu.

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On the more heavily populated island of Java, the ruling Hindu-Buddhist elites associated with kingdoms and principalities in the interior of the island were disinclined to embrace Islam in the manner of many of the trading communities along the northern coast. Nevertheless, over time the mystical ideas of Sufism, arriving via trade flows from the sub-continent and Yemen, penetrated the popular consciousness in Java, Sumatera and the coasts of Borneo, Sulawesi and eventually other islands in the east of the archipelago, preaching a tolerant version of Islam that facilitated respectful co-existence with other faiths. The increasing popularity of Islamic ideas and practices was attributed, in no small part, to their purported magical powers (keramat). To this day, mysticism remains a defining characteristic of Islam in this region. Sufi doctrines facilitated new converts in Southeast Asia in maintaining many of their customary practices and traditions (adapt), which continued to govern social life. For instance, women held prominent positions in social and familial spheres, contrasting with the Middle East and India. They also played an important role in small-scale trade in local markets.

The Wali Sanga/saint stories (the accounts of the nine saints) suggest that charismatic teachers played a key role in the rapid spread of Islam across Java during the fifteenth century. Their success in Islamicizing large parts of Java within the span of just half a century is remarkable. Studies indicate that the Wali Sanga's emphasis on the Islamic concept of equality was a significant factor in attracting the Javanese to Islam. Under the Majapahit rule in Java, a rigid social stratification existed, dividing people into two groups: the Gusti, who resided in palaces and had ownership rights, and the Kawula, who were slaves or servants without ownership rights. In contrast, the Wali Sanga introduced the notion of "Masyarakat" (*Musharakah* in Arabic), signifying a community of equals that stressed mutual cooperation among its members. This Sufi influence in Java and access the port networks of Muslim traders across Southeast Asia had a unique impact on the understanding and execution of power in the region during this period (Hooker 1983).

The Colonial Era, First Under Portuguese and Later Dutch Rule

The first Europeans to reach Southeast Asia were the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, drawn by the desire to secure access to key spices, such as clove, nutmeg, mace, and pepper, at their points of origin in

the archipelago. In 1511 the Portuguese, making effective use of ship-mounted canon, conquered the major city state and key trading hub of Malacca, and two years later seized control of spice growing islands in the Maluku islands group in the north east of the archipelago. At the time, spices were highly prized in Europe for preserving meat, enhancing flavour, and use in medicine and even magic potions, with some literally being worth their weight in gold. Prior to the Europeans' arrival, Muslim merchants dominated the spice trade from the to Europe. The Portuguese also took the opportunity to spread Catholicism, resulting in endless clashes with Muslim rulers over the propagation of Christianity and Islam in the region (Tarling 1992, 220–225). By 1605, however the Portuguese were forced to cede control to the Dutch, who emerged as the dominant power in what was to become known as the East Indies through the course of the seventeenth century.

The Dutch East India Company (known as Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC) was established in 1602, and the Dutch parliament granted it a monopoly on trade with the East Indies, similar to the British East India Company's rights in Britain. The VOC captured Jayakarta (modern-day Jakarta) in 1619, rebuilding the city and renaming it Batavia and increasingly involved themselves in Java's politics. Later, in 1641, they expelled the Portuguese from Malacca and eliminated the last Portuguese influence in Sumatra by 1660. Subsequently, the VOC captured most of Java from the Mataram Empire. Over the centuries, the VOC exploited rivalries among smaller kingdoms in Java, Malacca, and other islands, enabling them to expand their territorial control until the 1930s.

In 1800, the VOC went bankrupt and was dissolved. After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, the Dutch state regained control of Java. They implemented the Cultivation System in 1830, a system of industrial agriculture that proved to be ruthlessly exploitative, granting the Dutch a monopoly on the cultivation of export crops in Java. Under the Cultivation System, Javanese peasants were required to relinquish 1/5th of their harvests to the Dutch, in addition to the land tax they were already paying, totalling 2/5ths of their harvests. Under this system, which effectively created conditions of colonial slavery, the Dutch dictated what Javanese peasants produced, when, and how much. While this system generated substantial wealth for the Dutch between 1832 and 1866, it caused immense suffering for the Javanese people.

Much like the British in India, the Dutch relied on partnerships with the local aristocracy to govern their colony. This intermediary class of Javanese aristocracy, mainly comprised of ex-Mataram officials, enacted policies devised by the Dutch centre while also providing a layer of indigenous leadership that engaged with the Javanese people at the local level. As David Chandler (1987, 152) contends, the VOC "recognized and supported the local authority of regents and vassals…because it hoped to gain their political support and appease hostility…and because it wanted their help in exploiting the island". Anthony Reid (1999, ch. 9) documented the "slavery and bondage" system in Southeast Asia precipitated by colonial leadership. The European slave system differed from those in the ancient period, introducing a more brutal form of slavery associated with captive "outsiders" as opposed to the local Southeast Asian system where "slaves were treated as well as servants in Europe, if not better" (Bross 2017, 195–196).

The continuing consolidation of territory controlled by the Dutch East Indies up until the 1930s had significant implications for Indonesian politics. Colonization inadvertently united the Indonesian people under a single banner, with the Indonesian nationalist movement emerging from the struggle for freedom from Dutch control. The Dutch thus became 'the common enemy' of the diverse peoples living in what was to become Indonesia (Yilmaz and Morieson 2022).[1]

The Indonesian Independence Movement, Its Leader Sukarno, and the Pancasila Ideology

Indonesia gained its independence in August 1945 after 300 years of the **Dutch colonial rule** and three years of Japanese invasion. After the 1945 declaration, the Indonesian Republic and the Dutch military and civilian forces were involved in four-years skirmishes and military operations, before the Dutch government, under intense international pressure, was forced to officially acknowledge Indonesian independence. The country's first president was Sukarno, who was also the leader of the

[1] The Dutch also built several roads and other infrastructure in Indonesia. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century, they embraced a so-called liberal notion of colonialism that emphasized the rights of local people vis-à-vis the colonial government. Due to these developments, some historians debated whether the Dutch imperialism was 'good' or 'bad' for Indonesia. For a lively debate on this issue, see Smail, 1961.

Indonesian independence struggle and the Indonesian nationalist movement (Vickers 2013). A brief, temporary, constitution was immediately drafted the same year for the new state. At the time, the constitution of 1945 was understood to be nothing more than an interim measure.

The nationalists were not entirely unprepared for independence after the Dutch finally left. During the tumultuous final months of the independence struggle, they had given considerable attention to debating the form and nature of the new Indonesian state. Some proto-Islamist elements wanted the new state to be an Islamic one, although with little clarity about what exactly Islamic state meant. Others wanted the state to at least recognize Islam as its official religion and to take some responsibility for enforcing piety and morality. But the majority of the nationalist leadership were deeply worried about formalising the role of Islam as a state religion. In part, this was because they feared that such a move would alienate both non-Muslims (who represented approximately fifteen per cent of the population) and the non-santri Muslims, whose beliefs and practices did not conform with conventionald pious expectations (and who represented perhaps more than half of the population). Instead, the parties agreed on an ideological system that, through creative ambiguity, acknowledged both the traditional concerns of conservatives and the secular notions of the nationalists (Barton 2002a, 2005, 2006, 2010).

First, it was agreed that the Indonesian state would be based on the precepts of **Pancasila** and would therefore be a 'theistic' but non-sectarian state. Sukarno introduced Pancasila to the people of Indonesia in a speech on June 1, 1945, setting forth his vision for the new nation. The term *Pancasila* was derived from Sanskrit—the scholarly language of Indian thought and pre-Islamic civilization—rather than from Arabic and *five* (panca) *principles* (sila) for communal life. The first 'sila', or principle, referenced belief in 'one supreme God' and was therefore congruent with *tauhid* (the 'oneness' of God), the doctrinal core of Islam, without privileging any one tradition. While it left Buddhists and Hindus at a disadvantage, the latter generally adopted a monotheistic terminology that suited Pancasila when required (Intan 2006; Yilmaz et al. 2022).

Secondly, the **secular**, or at least **non-sectarian**, nature of the Indonesian state was reinforced by an eleventh-hour decision to drop a caveating preamble, known as the Jakarta Charter, to the first sila of Pancasila that would have included the 'seven words': "with the obligation for adherents of Islam to carry out Islamic law" ("*dengan kewajiban*

untuk menjalankan Syari'ah Islam untukpemeluk-pemeluknya"). Sukarno and his fellow nationalist leaders, including Nahdlatul Ulama's Wahid Hasjim, were worried that the inclusion of the 'seven words' of the Jakarta Charter would have alienated non-Muslims and non-santri Muslims while pleasing but a minority of Indonesians. The Jakarta Charter removal, with the dropping of the 'seven words' requiring Muslims to follow Syari'ah became a bone of contention and a cause celebre for many Muslim politicians and leaders. The emotive campaign that developed provided a mechanism by which leaders with radical Islamist convictions could draw behind them a long tail of socially conservative Islamic leaders for whom the Jakarta Charter was a matter of largely symbolic importance (Fealy 2004). Unfortunately, the dispute was to have consequences that went well beyond what most of those who joined the fray could have envisioned.

In August 1950, following the cessation of hostilities with the Dutch in December 1949 and a rapid transition from a federal system to a unitary republic, the nationalists assembled an unelected parliament in the People's Representative Council (DPR—*Dewan Perkawilan Rakyat*) forming the lower house of the legislature. The DPR drafted a parliamentary Provisional Constitution the same year. Indonesia's first elections were held in September 1955, which elected members of the parliament (DPR) and the Constitutional Assembly, who were responsible for drafting a new constitution. The Constitutional Assembly (Konstituante) was the body charged with formulating a comprehensive replacement to the Interim Constitution of 1950. The 1950 Constitution emphasized parliamentary democracy. It had replaced the vague and unsatisfactory 1945 Constitution, which had an integralist and authoritarian vision of the state. Although a considerable improvement over its precursor, the 1950 Constitution was also never intended to be anything more than a stopgap measure (Juwana 2006).

The 1955 elections for both the DPR and the Constitutional Assembly produced broadly similar results with the 402 out of the 514 seats in the Assembly going to the four largest parties. The centre-left Indonesian National Party (PNI—Partai Nasional Indonesia) secured 119 seats. Support for the two centre-right Islamic parties each almost equalling that for PNI: the Islamic modernist Masyumi Party (dominated by Muhammadiyah affiliates) with 112 seats, and the Islamic traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, dominated by Nahdlatul Ulama affiliates) party, which had split from Masyumi in 1952, with 91 seats (Barton and

Fealy 1996). The left-wing Indonesian Communist Party (PKI—Partai Kommunis Indonesia) secured 80 seats, having done surprisingly well in both the September and December elections (Lev 1967). The Constitutional Assembly met in four blocks of sittings between November 1956 and June 1959 to thrash out a series of political compromises and produce a permanent constitution. The results of the 1955 elections were a surprise to many in the four large parties—the 1955 elections representing as they did the first-ever opportunity to ascertain an objective and comprehensive map of communal allegiances in Indonesia. It was clear that the aliran or 'streams' of communal allegiance associated with the large parties were surprisingly evenly matched in size. This confirmed the wisdom of Sukarno and the leading nationalists in pushing for a pluralist and inclusive philosophical foundation for the new state. It did not, however, resolve the issue of the Jakarta Charter and the aspirations of the political Islamists. Heated disagreements arose over the philosophical basis for the state: whether it was to be a state based on Pancasila, Islam, or the family, with none of the factions/blocs able to secure the necessary two-thirds majority.

Decolonization, Islamic Movements, and Indonesian Nationalism

Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama were two very large, mass-based Islamic organisations that emerged in the early twentieth century in Indonesia and played an important role in the country's nationalist movement and politics. Ahmad Dahlan founded Muhammadiyah in 1912 and was influenced by the largely progressive ideas of the Egyptian reformer, Muhammad Abduh, who espoused modern, scientific learning and rationalism. Muhammadiyah promoted secular modern schools, generally called *madrasah*, and shunned theological education due to its association with Sufism prevalent in the traditional Islamic educational institutions of the Dutch East Indies.

In contrast, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, which means "Awakening of the Ulama", was established in 1926 to unite the *ulama* (Islamic scholars) and their residential madrasah, known as *pesantren*, under a formal network. The movement aimed to preserve traditional Islamic scholarship, beliefs, and practices. Muhammadiyah's growing influence and the popularity of its modern schools were a significant factor in the formation of Nahdlatul Ulama (Barton 1997a, 1997b; Barton and Fealy

1996). Despite their common origins and initial cooperation, theological, cultural, and political differences led to the separation of the two movements, with NU politicians breaking away to form a separate political party in advance of the 1955 general elections.

The leaders of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama played a key role in Indonesia's independence struggle alongside secular nationalists like Sukarno during the 1930s and 1940s. They also supported Pancasila, the non-sectarian state philosophy that became the foundation of Indonesian politics. Nevertheless, the political leaders from Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama within the Masyumi Party, which represented observant santri Muslims, had a falling out. As a result, the NU leaders left to form their own party, Nahdlatul Ulama, in preparation for the 1955 general elections.

In 1957, President Sukarno's attempts to draft a new constitution made slow progress due to contestation over the role of Islam in the state, providing Sukarno with a pretext, in conjunction with problems associated with a separatist movement in the religiously conservative, and culturally assertive, region of West Sumatra, home to the entrepreneurial Minangkabau people, to dismiss the Constitutional Assembly and dissolve parliament. Out of frustration Sukarno implemented martial law and declared himself the leader of the republic under what he called "Guided Democracy". Sukarno had always been inclined towards populism, and his visit to Mao's China in October of the previous year had further inspired him to move away from parliamentary democracy and align more closely with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In late 1965, on the 30th of September/1st of October 1965, Sukarno was replaced by General Suharto, following a mysterious event which was described as a coup attempt. This event, at the height of the Cold War, involved an intervention by the Americans via the CIA to bring to an end the increasingly erratic and left-leaning regime of Sukarno and replace it with a pro-western alliance government. This was declared to be necessary to prevent the spread of communism in Southeast Asia, as successive states aligned with the Communist Block, a proposition known as the "domino theory".

The Suharto Coup and the Demise of the First Democratic Era

> It is not the military strength of the Communists but their fanaticism and ideology which is the principal element of their strength. To consider this, each country in the area needs an ideology of its own with which to counter the Communists. But a national ideology is not enough by itself. The well-being of the people must be improved so that it strengthens and supports the national ideology.
>
> —Suharto speaking to President Ford in 1975

Throughout the three decades of Suharto's rule, which ended with his resignation in May 1998, Indonesia was, technically, a military-backed authoritarian state. For the most part, however, the military was weak, under-funded, and constrained in its political reach, and the regime's authoritarianism was for the most part soft rather than hard, with the significant exception of the way it treated perceived dissent and competition. Although elections were held, they were greatly constrained and were neither free nor fair. Initially welcomed by the public as bringing a "New Order" (as Suharto's regime became known) of stability after the chaotic years of Sukarno's "Old Order" "Guided Democracy" regime, and bolstered by rapid economic growth and developmental reforms on the back of sales of Indonesia's oil and gas reserves, the Suharto regime faced constant criticism from civil society from the early 1970s. The result was that civil society actors and institutions were met with periodic rounds of repression and harassment. Even though this repression of civil society involved occasional lethal force, and stifled justice and accountability, in Indonesia's growing cities, and especially in the national capital Jakarta, writers, journalists, activists, and artists contributed to a lively culture of "wry dissent" through theatre, literature, and investigative journalism.

The Suharto era was marked by episodes of a harsh crackdowns on opposition forces, extensive persecution of communists by both the regime and Islamic groups, rampant corruption, especially by a self-serving oligarchy, and by a military forced to finance its own overheads and running costs through business ventures. Despite the regime's bought of repression, which included occasional lethal force and hindered justice and accountability, a vibrant culture of subtle dissent flourished in Indonesia's growing cities, particularly Jakarta. Writers, journalists,

activists, and artists contributed to this dynamic atmosphere, which ultimately played a vital role in shaping the nation's political future.

Many of civil society's leader thinkers and activists were either Islamic intellectuals or were inspired by critical and progressive Islamic thought (Barton 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002b). A small but influential 'renewal of Islamic thought' movement emerged to play a significant role in pushing for political and social reforms. Inspired by the 'neo-Modernist' ideas of Chicago-based Pakistani reformist scholar Fazlur Rahman, and led by the brilliant and charismatic Nurcholish Madjid, the movement supported desacralization, the secularization of politics, and progressive Islamic thought and practice. Neo-modernism was progressive in that it has a positive attitude towards modernity and development and an open-minded approach to cultural change and adaptation (Barton 1994, 1995b, 1997a, 1997b; Barton and Feillard 1999). Significantly, it did not see the West as an 'occidental other' in which Islam does not and cannot have any part. Similar ideas were developed and articulated in parallel with those of the campus-based public intellectual Nurcholish Madjid, and the neo-modernist movement he inspired, by the traditionalist Islamic intellectual and alim, or member of the ranking ulama, Abdurrahman Wahid, executive chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama. Largely free of the inferiority complex that hung heavily upon the thought of many Muslim thinkers at the time, Madjid and Wahid, popularly known as Cak Nur and Gus Dur, articulated a sophisticated and comprehensive synthesis of classical Islamic scholarship and modern critical thought. They showed that religion does not need to be tied to political parties and defended by political campaigns for it to shape the character of a nation.

Suharto's Coup and Guided Democracy

Indonesia's early democratic forays did not produce result in the lasting consolidation. The battling ideological sides could not come to a democratic agreement which provided opportunity for the military to reassert its dominance. Discussions in the final sitting of the Assembly in 1959 were immediately overtaken by a cabinet decision to return to the 1945 Constitution, a decision that carried considerable force under the martial law conditions that had been instituted two years earlier in March 1957, in the wake of a series of regional rebellions. Had the Constitutional Assembly been able to complete its task, Indonesia would have had very

likely gained a constitution of considerable sophistication, and importantly, one arrived at via a transparently democratic process that gave voice to all aliran. Unfortunately, in July 1959, nine months before it was scheduled to conclude its deliberations, Sukarno dissolved the Constitutional Assembly arguing that as it had not been able to arrive a consensus on the Jakarta Charter after sitting for three and a half years it lacked practical legitimacy and represented a failed experiment. This judgement conveniently overlooked all that the Constitutional Assembly had achieved, which included significant consensus on human rights and the division of powers within government (Fealy 2001).

Along with this decision came cabinet support for the implementation of President Sukarno's long-discussed concept of Guided Demokrasi (*Demokrasis Terpimpin*), inspired by his visit to Mao's China in October 1956 (Bhakti 2004). On July 5, 1959, Sukarno, backed by Army Chief of Staff General Nasution, issued a decree to dissolve the Constitutional Assembly and reinstate the 1945 Constitution which made him, as president, both head of government and head of state.

The political forces were either not willing or too weak to challenge Sukarno's bid to turn Indonesia into essentially an authoritarian country. The PNI, the party to which Sukarno was most closely aligned, was the first to support the move to Guided Democracy. The NU leaders held reservations, but facing pending corruption charges reluctantly gave their support, albeit without first consulting their members. The PKI leaders, recognizing that change was inevitable, dropped their objections. Only Masyumi remained opposed, with members fearing that there would be too few checks and balances on the president's authority, save for his realpolitik need, under martial law, for the backing of the military. Unable to achieve consensus, the Assembly was defenceless against dissolution, and Masyumi by itself lacked the numbers to block Sukarno's transition to a 'benign dictatorship' (Majid 2010). The 'Father of the Nation' went from having but nominal, symbolic, power under the 1950 Constitution to achieving unfettered constitutional authority that mirrored his populist rhetoric and unparalleled charismatic authority.

Sukarno skilfully leveraged his charismatic authority as the leader of the nationalist movement during the Japanese occupation and the five-year revolutionary struggle against Dutch forces following World War II, ultimately consolidating his political power. However, Sukarno was not the only beneficiary of the Guided Democracy. Other military elites gained significant prestige and power from this arrangement as well.

The Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI), which emerged from a union of the Dutch-era Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) and revolutionary militias, entered the 1950s with considerable legitimacy and moral authority (Jenkins 2010). Generals Nasution and TB Simatupang adeptly maintained a moderate stance, keeping the ABRI out of formal politics and allaying fears of military intervention. With the advent of Guided Democracy, Nasution's "Middle Way" doctrine was realized, as outlined in a notable speech in 1958. This doctrine proposed that the ABRI should neither seize direct political power nor remain passive when the nation faced potential chaos. The combination of martial law and Guided Democracy allowed Nasution, who Sukarno appointed as Minister for Defence and Security while retaining his position as Army Chief of Staff, to position the military as a moderate force for stability and a counterbalance to the powerful president (Crouch 2007).

With the Guided Democracy regime leaving little real leverage for the four large parties, a triangular power contest emerged between Sukarno, the ABRI, and the PKI. In 1960, Sukarno moved to ban Masyumi, claiming links between Masyumi leaders and separatist elements in West Sumatra. In the years that followed, Sukarno became progressively closer to the PKI. The politics of the Cold War led to American support for the rebellious groups in Sumatra who were fighting against the communists as well as the central Indonesian state there. As he consolidated power, Sukarno took an increasingly critical stance towards **the United States** and its Western allies due to their **intervention** in Indonesia's domestic affairs. Throughout the Guided Democracy period, the Indonesian economy continued to sharply deteriorate, exacerbated by an aggressive nationalization campaign that saw foreign investment extinguished and private assets seized. The military campaign to seize control of the former Dutch colony of West New Guinea, which precipitated the New York Agreement and transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia in 1963, was a useful distraction for Sukarno but did nothing to address his underlying domestic issues nor address international concerns, heightened by Cold War anxieties (Weinstein 2007). Likewise, the bizarre *Konfrontasi* campaign with newly independent neighbour Malaysia provided momentary distraction but only served to undermine confidence with Sukarno's leadership, not least within ABRI.

By 1965, Sukarno's Indonesia had entered its 'Year of Living Dangerously'. A **US-supported internal military coup** on the night of September 30—framed as a plot by the communist PKI—saw Nasution

narrowly escape capture and execution (six other generals were murdered) and Sukarno forced to cede effective power to General Suharto, who made the best of the circumstances. The bloody transition from the Sukarno (Old Order) regime to the Suharto (New Order) regime saw the intervention by the United States through the CIA and also a pogrom against members of the Indonesian Communist Party in which many hundreds of thousands were killed. Most of the communists were killed at the hands of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama community members who justified their action on the grounds that 'if they did not eliminate the Communists the Communists would have eliminated them' (Cribb 2001).[2]

Suharto and the New Order

The change of power from **Sukarno to Suharto** did not restore bring democracy but rather consolidated the political role of the military that had been in the making since 1955. Indonesia remained under the military-backed authoritarian rule of retired General Muhammad Suharto for three decades, from October 1965 until May 1998 (Elson 2001). Legislative elections were held in 1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997 for the 500 seats in the DPR, though none of them were free or fair. From 1977 onwards, only two nominal opposition parties, the nationalist Democratic Party of Indonesia (PDI—Partai Demokrasi Indonesia) and the Islamic United Development Party (PPP—Partai

[2] We make an early distinction between the 'radical' Islamists (Darul Islam) and Muslim mass organizations in Indonesia (NU and Muhammadiyah): "Throughout its ninety-year history, Muhammadiyah has consistently remained a force for moderation and public good". But these mass killings of communists seriously contradict this argument. Per *Independent*, "A December 1965 cable from the US Consulate in Medan, Indonesia, reported that preachers in Muhammadiyah mosques were telling congregations that all who joined the communist party must be killed", saying they are the "lowest order of infidel, the shedding of whose blood is comparable to killing chicken" (https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/indonesia-anti-communist-massacres-1960s-us-knew-cia-desclassifed-embassy-files-jakarta-a8006186.html). Neither NU nor Muhammadiyah remained the same: their ideas moderated over time, and in 2000, Wahid apologized for what happened to the Communists in the hands of NU Islamists back in the 1960s (which is rarely, if ever done in the Muslim world, especially by Islamists). Nonetheless, this looks more like a trajectory of 'moderation', rather than always being a moderate. Also, the whole 1965 fake coup reminds us of the July 15th coup in Turkey, especially insofar as how each was used by the state to exterminate the opposition (Communists and Gulenists, respectively).

Pembangunan Indonesia) were permitted to go up against Golkar, the dominant governing party. Suharto was the sole candidate for the 'internally elected' position of president (at least up until 1997), and ultimate authority was nominally vested with the super parliament—the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR—Majelis Permusyarwaratan Rakyat) which was comprised of the 500 elected members of the DPR, 132 members of the Regional Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah), and 368 unelected representatives of 'functional groups', including 100 from the military (Liddle 1996).

A further four elections were held at five yearly intervals by the Suharto regime. These **elections were tightly controlled** and were intended to produce a tame legislature that would legitimize but not interfere with the regime. The 500 elected members of the legislature were augmented by a further 500 appointed members to form a super parliament called the People's Consultant Assembly, which met once every five years for the purpose of electing the president. As this assembly was only ever faced with a single candidate for the executive, there was little notion of Indonesia functioning as a regular democracy. Suharto's legitimacy came therefore not from this procedural mechanism, but from the performance of his regime in delivering significant advances in development, particularly in the area of education and health during the first decades of his regime. Despite the clearly non-democratic nature of the regime and its dependence upon the military to remain in power, the Suharto regime was for the most part a soft authoritarian regime. Although it was capable of significant malevolence towards dissenters, this never reached the level of more hard-line authoritarian regimes elsewhere in the developing world, save for the significant exceptions of periodic crackdowns on radical Islamists and left-leaning students, the suppressing of separatist movements at either end of the archipelago in Aceh and Papua, and the invasion of East Timor in 1975.

The more benign and positive aspects of the regime came in large measure through its engagement of technocratic expertise and five-year central planning (Robison 1988). This was facilitated by the oil boom of the 1970s and revenue from this industry together with revenue from mining, forestry, and agriculture throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. This, together with a low-wage manufacturing sector, attracted considerable foreign direct investment. Development remained highly centralized with Java, and in particular the national capital Jakarta, being much more intensively developed than the rest of the archipelago. By the

1990s, demands for greater political freedom and freedom from human rights abuses grew steadily stronger. As the regime approached the end of its third decade, the question of political transition and of what would replace the Suharto regime became a dominant theme within civil society discourse. There was no question that the vast majority of people aspired to the achievement of free and fair elections and the development of genuine democracy. This was true of Islamist elements as much as it was secular nationalist groups.

Most Islamist, as well as communist, political actors were heavily persecuted. Remaining organizations were connected to the state apparatus. However, civil society was never completely crushed in Indonesia. For almost eighty years, the civil sphere has had two enormous girders buttressing its freedom from state pressure. As much as a third of the Indonesian population has been affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, whose strength today is thought to number around forty million and thirty million members, respectively (Barton 1995a; Barton and Fealy 1996). Support for these mass-based Islamic organizations, the largest of their kind anywhere in the world, is so extensive that, even in its most authoritarian phase, the Suharto regime dared not oppose them directly (Barton 2003, 2006, 2008).

Islamists Under the Suharto Rule

Although both Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama have made a significant contribution towards moderating attitudes and behaviour in Indonesian society, the history of both organizations is filled with active political involvement and sometimes violence during the early years of Indonesian independence. Both organizations were involved in the **Islamic Masyumi Party**, established by the invading Japanese forces to control Islamic expression in Indonesia. Later on, Masyumi became independent of the Japanese influence, and as we mentioned before, Islamic fractions led by Masyumi supported the Pancasila ideas promoted by the nationalist forces under Sukarno.

In the 1950s, Masyumi leader Natsir was regarded as a relatively moderate and sophisticated thinker (Kahin 2012). At the time of the 1955 election, Islamist political ideology was only just beginning to reach its modern form. Natsir and the others within Masyumi who were in clear support of the Jakarta Charter and Indonesia being formed as an Islamic state were influenced both by the ideas of Maududi in South Asia

and more directly by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, which itself had taken on many of Maududi's ideas (Barton 2005, 2009; Vergani, Barton and Wahid 2022; Platzdasch 2009).[3]

It was not clear in the 1950s what proportion of Masyumi leaders and supporters supported the idea of an Islamic state, but it was clear that the idea had stronger support within Masyumi than within NU. Natsir and his fellow Masyumi leaders were hopeful of being politically rehabilitated and playing a role of significance in the new regime (Madinier 2015; Fealy and Platzdasch 2005). They were to be sorely disappointed, for Suharto was almost as concerned about radical Islamism as he was about communism. In the 1971 election, despite the thwarting of an attempt to resurrect Masyumi in the form of a new party named Parmusi, it was clear that political Islam was still a major force within Indonesia. The 1971 election, the first since 1955, was neither free nor fair, but it was sufficiently open that the Suharto regime was able to gain a clear sense of public sentiment. Suharto's new party, Golkar, achieved a solid 62.8% of the vote, assisted considerably by the fact that all public servants and military personnel were required to support Golkar and knew that their choice was being monitored. This drastically eroded the support for Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), which saw its vote share plummet from 22.3% in 1955 to just 6.9% in 1971. And Parmusi, whose leadership Suharto had stacked with compliant, low-profile figures, unconnected with Natsir and other Masyumi leaders gained a mere 5.4% of the 1971 vote, barely more than one quarter of the 20.9% achieved by Masyumi in 1955. Nevertheless, NU received 18.7% of the 1971 vote, neatly matching the 18.4% it obtained in 1955, helping bring the total support for Islamic parties in the 1971 election to 27.1% (Barton 2006, 2010; Effendy 2003).

In 1973, the regime moved to consolidate the nine existing opposition parties into just two parties: the Democratic Party of Indonesia (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia—PDI) and the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembanguan—PPP). The former was clearly intended to capture the secular nationalist vote, while the latter was meant to serve as a sop to Islamic interests. Neither party, however, was allowed to develop a strong ideological character beyond these general communal distinctions. Consequently, the United Development Party (PPP) was

[3] For background and analysis of the development of Islamist thought in Indonesia, refer to: Barton (2017, 2004b, 2009), Eliraz (2013), Bubalo and Fealy (2005), Hasan (2006), Hefner (1997, 2011), Hosen (2007), and van Bruinessen (2012).

forbidden from adopting an Islamist platform of the kind associated with the Muslim brotherhood. Even so, the 'Islamic vote' remained strong, and in the next election, in 1977, the PPP achieved 29.3% of the vote, representing a slight increase compared with the 27.1% total achieved by the four Islamic parties contesting the 1971 elections. Support for Golkar remaining largely unchanged at 62.1%, leaving 8.6% for the Democratic Party of Indonesia, PDI (Barton 1997a; Barton and Feillard 1999; Suryadinata and Emmerson 1991).

Conclusion

This chapter traced the history of Indonesia, from the colonial period to the conclusion of Suharto's three decades long dictatorship. The end of Dutch colonialism did not immediately result in a more open, liberal-democratic society in Indonesia. Rather, the defacto leader of the independence movement Sukarno commandeered—with sometimes reluctant support of Indonesia's political parties and Islamic movements—the movement to a positive end. But a decade later, during his 'guided democracy' phase, Sukarno turned the country away from democracy. Under Sukarno, Indonesian society was to be based on the principles of *Pancasila*, a theistic but non-sectarian national philosophy. Sukarno attempted to create a relatively pluralist society, although the inherently monotheistic framing of *Pancasila* brought forth difficulties when it came to including Hindus into the new Indonesia. Equally, non-orthodox Muslims were concerned by the *Pancasila's* insistence on adherents of Islam must carry out Islamic law.

Sukarno's attempts to create a new Indonesian society based on *Pancasila* and 'guided democracy' came in an abrupt end in 1965 when the Americans—fearful of Sukarno developing closer ties with the Soviet Union and China, and pursuing a more communist-oriented agenda—backed a seizure of power that saw Sukarno and his government overthrown. Following Sukarno's removal from power, one of his generals, Suharto, moved quickly and without opposition to assume control of the country. Suharto set about destroying communist influence, and with the support of the military and the Islamic movements Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, slaughtered at least 500,000

communists. Suharto established a sometimes violent, sometimes benevolent authoritarian regime which lasted thirty two, until it was replaced with a democratic system.

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CHAPTER 5

The Rise and Fall of Democracy in Turkey

Introduction

This chapter investigates the trajectory of the Islamist AKP in Turkish politics, examining its initial democratization efforts and subsequent authoritarian shift that led to the decline of civil Islam and the rise of Salafism and Caliphism. The analysis posits that incumbent Islamist politicians within AKP, led by former prime minister, and now president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan view civil Islam as a threat to their power, resulting in their adoption of populist politics and the portrayal of civil Islam as a danger to Islam itself. The chapter emphasizes the role of religious populism as a tool for authoritarianism in Muslim-majority countries and underscores the importance of protecting civil society and democratic values against such political movements.

The rise of the AKP, founded in 2001 by key individuals in the pragmatic moderate wing of Milli Gorus, marked a significant shift in Turkish politics. In the November 2002 election, the AKP won 34% of the popular vote for the Grand National Assembly, easily outpacing the CHP, which secured less than 11%. This victory can be attributed to a widespread societal disillusionment with established parties, perceived as culpable for the 2001 economic collapse.

In its early years, the AKP concentrated on democratization and pursued reforms aimed at EU accession until 2007. These efforts helped

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the party maintain power and curtail the influence of the secular military and judiciary establishment. However, the AKP eventually abandoned its reformist approach, and instead increasingly turned towards authoritarianism. This shift, characterized by the party's portrayal of civil Islam as a threat to Islam itself and its obsession with retaining power, led to the decline of civil Islam and the emergence of Salafism and Caliphism in Turkey's socio-political landscape. The chapter argues that this authoritarian turn was facilitated by the thin ideology of religious populism, which rationalizes the suppression of civil society and democratic opposition.

The dynamics of politics in the Turkish Republic can be summarized as a series of actions and reactions. Democratization and authoritarianism represent two ends of a continuum within which Turkish politics continue to oscillate. Laicism, an extreme form of secularism borrowed by the Republic's founders from France, has served as the ideological basis for the Kemalist state establishment's authoritarian policies throughout most of the Republic's early history. Conversely, Islam has provided a significant source of meaning through which the subordinated masses have expressed their opposition.

The 1923 Revolution led to the establishment of the Kemalist secularist government, which was later challenged by popular reaction in 1950 when the centre-right Democratic Party (DP) came to power in the first-ever free and fair elections in Turkish history. Although the DP government initially pursued democratic policies, it quickly embarked on an authoritarian journey that not only challenged the democratic principles it advocated for but also the laicist core of the Republic. In 1960, when the DP government became too powerful for the Kemalist military to tolerate, a laicist reaction manifested in the form of Turkey's first coup d'état, ending DP rule and establishing the first period of military tutelage. However, the Kemalist military could never fully dictate its will to Turkey's civilian politicians, and throughout the 1960s and 1970s, several centre-right and Islamist parties emerged to challenge the core tenets of both the military tutelage and Kemalism.

The Kemalist military intervened in politics once again in 1980, this time with the aim of ending infighting between leftist and rightist groups and establishing a new ideological regime under the umbrella term of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (TİS). In accordance with NATO's policy of using Islam as a bulwark against the threat of communism (the "Green Belt") during the 1980s, the TİS allowed the Kemalist state to both

strengthen its alliance with the United States and curb the growing left-wing opposition while embracing the conservative nationalist masses. But, will be discussed further in this chapter, the civilian and political space that the Kemalist regime provided to Islamic forces unintentionally strengthened the power of Islamic political and civil society organizations in Turkey throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The Islamists in Turkey managed to secure the Prime Ministerial post in 1997 under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, the founding father of the first Islamist party in Turkey. This development, however, triggered a reaction from the Kemalist establishment, which led to the infamous 28th February process—a "soft coup" in 1997 (Oran 2006, 28–30).

The final element in this chain of reactions materialized in 2002 with the rise of the AKP, largely due to the failure of non-Islamist political actors to effectively manage Turkey's economy and governance. Unlike previous periods, the AKP successfully absorbed various reactions within the system in later years (Demir 2020), including massive demonstrations in 2007 and 2013, a closure trial in 2008, an e-memorandum in 2007, and a bizarre alleged "coup attempt" in 2016 that allowed Erdoğan to accelerate his ongoing purge to unprecedented levels.

During their first decade, the AKP and Erdoğan utilized the process of democratization reforms and preparations for EU admission to mitigate the pressure of adverse reactions. Ironically, during the second decade of his rule, Erdoğan executed a 180-degree turn. The leader once perceived as a great champion of democracy transformed into the worst autocrat in Turkish history within a few short years. Like other Islamist parties, Erdoğan's AKP employed elements of Islamic and populist discourse to mobilize the masses. Erdoğan also heavily relied on generating fear to secure his political position and maintain his grip on power (Shipoli 2010, 2018). The most frequently used elements in Turkey's dynamics of fear are the oppressive secularism of the Kemalist regime and suffocating military tutelage. Skilfully, Erdoğan managed to invert both elements and turn them to his advantage.

Following the July 15, 2016 "coup," Erdoğan fulfilled his promise to "purge the military" and removed almost half of the senior leadership across all services. Simultaneously, he intensified his paradoxical blend of radical Islamist rhetoric and Kemalist-style nationalism throughout society. Under his deeply personalized strongman rule, the hyper-nationalist AKP government is now associated with corruption,

crony capitalism, crackdowns against the opposition, mass clientelism, environmental degradation, populism, and electoral fraud (Ark-Yıldırım 2017; Arslantaş 2019; Özpek and Park 2020; Çapan and Zarakol 2019; Arslantaş and Arslantaş 2022; Yilmaz et al. 2021, 2023a; Yabancı 2022; Adar and Yenigün 2021; Adiguzel 2023).

1980s, the Rise of Islamism in Turkey

The National Outlook Movement (Milli Gorus Hareketi—MGH), a collective of Turkish Islamists, emerged in the 1970s as fervently anti-Western, anti-democratic, and anti-secularist. Advocating for religio-nationalist and Islamist ideals, they opposed Turkey's integration into the EU, the Western alliance, and the US-led global economic order (Yilmaz 2000, 2005, 2011). Nevertheless, the MGH has substequently adjusted its stance on these issues to boost its appeal, demonstrating remarkable adaptability in response to the shifting political landscape to maximize their influence.

Initially, the MGH formed the National Order Party and the National Salvation Party, both of which were disbanded by the military establishment due to their Islamist views. They then established the Welfare Party (RP) in 1983, receiving a mere 7% of votes in the 1987 parliamentary elections. Learning from this setback, the RP adjusted its economic programme to appeal to its core constituency: Anatolian small business owners (Yilmaz 2000, 2005, 2011).

During the 1980s, the Motherland Party (ANAP), led by Turgut Ozal, dominated Turkish politics with its neoliberal and export-oriented economic policies, benefiting small business owners and the emerging Muslim bourgeoisie in Anatolia. As a result, the RP shifted its stance to align with neoliberalism, allowing them to better attract these voters (Yavuz 2003, 213). This change enabled the RP to evolve from a fringe Islamist party to a mass party with broader societal representation. Consequently, the RP secured 17% and 21% of votes in the 1991 and 1995 elections, respectively, and won mayoral positions in Istanbul and Ankara in 1994.

In June 1996, RP leader Necmettin Erbakan became Turkey's first Islamist Prime Minister. Despite occasional rhetoric in favour of secularism and democracy, the RP's underlying Islamist orientation remained evident. Oran (2006, 28) describes the RP's behaviour in power as akin to a "spoiled child", with Erbakan making provocative statements about

the potential for bloodshed and Erdoğan challenging the concept of national sovereignty. These remarks alarmed the military, culminating in the 1997 "postmodern coup" that ousted Erbakan's government. In response, Turkish Islamists began invoking democratic principles, human rights, and other Western ideals in an attempt to resist further repression and to protect themselves from further persecution of the Kemalist army (Oran 2006, 28). The MGH's evolution demonstrates that, contrary to perceptions of rigid ideology, Turkish Islamist parties have been adaptable in their social, political, economic, and foreign policy stances to optimize political gains. This adaptability has been key to their continued relevance in Turkish politics.

Political Opportunity Structures and Islamist Ideological Change in the Late 1990s

After the 1997 soft coup, Turkish Islamists began to tactically change their behaviour to accommodate secular interests. Today, Islamists are increasingly viewed as "strategic thinkers engaged in cost-benefit calculations" (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler 2006, 298). They use ideology both instrumentally and strategically, prioritizing political objectives over religious laws, which can be adapted to fit strategic narratives. Furthermore, religious discourse is often employed to justify political decisions, making religion a tool to support their political calculations and broader agenda.

Following the coup, Turkish Islamists began referencing universal human rights and concepts such as liberal democracy, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly to support their political rights and condemn the practices of the Kemalist regime. This shift occurred due to several significant political developments in the 1990s that led Islamists to recognize they could use ideas like democracy, human rights, and the European Union (EU) to protect themselves from the encroachments of the Kemalist military and bureaucracy.

One of these developments was the guerrilla warfare between the Turkish military and Kurdish militants in southeastern Turkey. The military's harsh response to the Kurdish insurgency drew criticism from Western governments, human rights organizations, and the EU. These criticisms put the military in a defensive position and led them to adopt an anti-EU stance to defend their actions. As a result, the military became increasingly critical of the West and concepts like human rights

and democracy. The conflict with the Kurds also securitized Turkish society and politics, empowering Kemalist bureaucracies at the expense of minority groups, liberal intellectuals, and the Muslim bourgeoisie. These groups turned to the concepts of human rights, democracy, and the EU to protect themselves from Kemalist encroachments. Another significant development was the adoption of the Copenhagen Criteria, which tied EU accession for candidate countries to their performance in human rights and democratization. In this political climate, Turkish Islamists realized they could make instrumental use of ideas like democracy, human rights, and the EU to protect themselves and forcefully criticize their treatment by Kemalist elites.

A more profound shift occurred after the soft coup in 1997, when the military establishment forced the Welfare Party out of government and later shut down the party through the Constitutional Court for its Islamist and anti-secular views. Following this event, younger Turkish Islamists shifted their orientation towards embracing the West and the EU. While this strategy did not save the Welfare Party (nor its immediate successor, the Virtue Party), it became instrumental in helping the Justice and Development Party (AKP) after coming to power in 2002. As a result, the Kemalist establishment was seen as an obstacle to adopting Western civilization, while Islamists were perceived as guides towards Western values. This development significantly undermined the Kemalist establishment's main source of legitimacy as the standard-bearer of Western civilization.

In its initial two and a half terms, the AKP, backed by the West, functioned as a democratizing force that challenged Kemalist dominance. The party launched the "Kurdish Opening" and negotiated with the banned PKK to disarm the group and address the Kurdish issue (Pusane 2014, 81; Gourlay 2020). During this time, the political climate was so favourable towards a democratic society that previously taboo topics were discussed in a relatively non-securitized environment. The government implemented several significant reforms to tackle the challenges faced by the Kurdish population in Turkey. The plan assumed that democratization would resolve the Kurdish problem. AKP leader, prime minister, and later President Erdoğan acknowledged and persuaded his supporters that the state had violated the rights of the Kurds. After a period of silence, low-level developments occurred in March 2013 with the beginning of a new initiative called the Reconciliation Process (Demir 2019). During the June 2015 general election campaign, however, when it became

apparent that the Kurds would not support the centralization of power in Erdoğan's hands, the desecuritization process was reversed, and Kurdish demands were resecuritized. Kurds have been treated harsh manner ever since (Geri 2017; Özpek 2019; Gürses 2020; Yilmaz et al. 2022, 2023b).

The Rise of AKP and Its Democratic Decade Under Kemalist Hegemony

The Islamist AKP's victory in 2002 resulted from a combination of structural factors and Islamist resourcefulness. Firstly, the Kemalist regime's forceful removal of Erbakan from his position as Prime Minister, and the closure of the RP and its successor, the FP, angered conservative Turkish citizens who viewed the Islamists as victims of Kemalist oppression. Secondly, the younger Islamists' pragmatic shift in discourse towards embracing liberal-democratic norms and the EU accession process allowed the AKP to present itself as a centre-right party akin to Turgut Ozal's political stance, rather than a strictly Islamist one. This helped increase the AKP's vote share. Thirdly, the 1999 Marmara earthquake and the 2001 economic crisis severely undermined the legitimacy of both left and right-wing political parties in Turkey, allowing the AKP to position itself as a reforbits alternative. In this context, the AKP came to power in 2002 and began pursuing democratization reforms aimed at EU accession.

A thorough analysis of the AKP's early years in power reveals how the Islamists strategically navigated the ideological landscape of Turkish politics to ensure their survival and ultimately establish their hegemony. Scholars widely agree that the AKP prioritized 'survival' during its initial years (Hale and Ozbudun 2009; Börzel and Soyaltin 2012; Saatçioğlu, 2014). As previously mentioned, the Islamist movement in general, and the younger generation of Islamists who founded the AKP specifically, realized the importance of adapting their political ideology towards democracy and the West to survive (Yilmaz 2000, 2008, 2009; 2021). The EU's granting of candidate status to Turkey in 1999 created an attractive opportunity for the AKP to exploit. The Turkish political climate was ripe for exploitation due to the CHP's lack of political will, security issues, and the economic crisis.

Upon assuming power, the AKP immediately began implementing democratization reforms ostensibly aimed at fulfilling the EU's Copenhagen Criteria. These extensive reforms addressed numerous shortcomings in Turkey's democracy, including minority rights, freedom of speech, and the civilianization of the military. All major issues were tackled based on EU recommendations. Karaveli (2016) succinctly describes the AKP's first term, stating that the party "enhance[d] the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, the freedom of the press, and the rule of law".

During these years, the AKP also seemed to reconcile its Islamist mindset with the ideas of democracy and pluralism. The party embraced democratic notions to reshape its Islamist founders' image, garner EU support, and appeal to segments of society beyond its traditional base, such as Kurds, liberals, and moderate religious groups (Barton 2006, 2014) like the Gülen movement. Initially, the AKP was fully committed to intra-party democracy (Lancaster 2014, 1673), featuring prominent liberals, Kurdish politicians, and even Alevi representatives on its lists (Demir 2018). One of the party's rules stipulated that no one could be an MP candidate for more than three terms, a requirement for pursuing political positions in the government at that time.

The EU also played a significant role in helping the AKP expand its electoral base towards the centre and increase its vote share (Saatçioğlu 2014). Public opinion surveys consistently showed strong support for EU accession among Turkish citizens throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s. The AKP's pro-EU stance helped it gain votes from centre-right segments of society, effectively doubling the Islamists' vote share from 15 to 20% pre-AKP to 35%. Although the AKP government managed to initiate official negotiations for accession with the EU by 2005, severe opposition from Germany and France significantly stalled the accession process. The AKP's enthusiasm for reform also waned by 2007, giving rise to what some dubbed "reform fatigue" (Patton, 2007). As Somer (2017) explains, during this period, the AKP focused on consolidating its power and "capturing the state". The anti-Turkey stance of EU member nations, particularly France and Germany, and their unfair dismissal of Turkey's democratizing reforms were later used by Erdoğan in his discourse against the EU and the West. Consequently, Erdoğan successfully spun Western opposition to Turkey's EU bid to his advantage.

Selective Reforms and Strategic Manoeuvring: Islamists' Pursuit of Power in Turkey

In retrospect, the AKP's reluctance in the mid-2000s to continue reforming Turkey in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and European Union (EU) norms, and to implement the necessary legal and legislative measures concerning state transparency and accountability, signified Erdoğan's emerging authoritarian tendencies (Yilmaz et al. 2017). Börzel and Soyaltin (2012) showed that the AKP pursued "selective and differential domestic changes" in Turkey, which were "largely related to the extent to which EU conditionality helped domestic actors gain and hold political power" (p. 7).

Several examples highlight this phenomenon. Firstly, while the AKP was eager to reform military and judiciary structures to reduce their power, it did not pursue comparable reforms for the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) or the Higher Education Board (YOK). Both institutions' far-reaching powers and non-transparent structures remained untouched, eventually leading to AKP control. Secondly, the AKP was reluctant to implement liberal reforms concerning freedom of speech, keeping Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code in place, which criminalizes insulting Turkey or "Turkishness". Historically, this article has been exploited by state authorities to punish dissidents, and it continues to be abused under the Erdoğan regime. Both Diyanet and YOK now serve as platforms for promoting the AKP ideology. The Diyanet, in particular, has supported the Erdoganist regime by constructing and disseminating multi-dimensional populist binaries in Turkey, with weekly Friday sermons playing a crucial role in this process (Yilmaz et al. 2021; Yilmaz and Albayrak 2022).

The party consistently utilized political reforms to weaken rival institutions and infiltrate them from within. The AKP co-opted many minor party leaders by offering government positions, while also winning over larger political adversaries, particularly from the ultra-nationalist MHP, by granting them high-ranking posts. At the same time, Erdoğan and the AKP primarily targeted the judiciary and military. The 2010 Referendum introduced extensive constitutional changes, reorganizing the Constitutional Court and the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors to bring them under government control. This referendum garnered support from Erdoğan's more moderate allies, such as the Gülenists, liberals, religious minorities, and other oppressed groups. The constitutional changes also

weakened the military's power by cancelling the EMASYA protocol[1] and significantly limiting the authority of military courts, all of which were steps towards a more democratic country.

But the most significant blow to the military establishment came from the Ergenekon and Balyoz investigations. Between 2008 and 2011, the government purged numerous high-ranking military generals known for their secular and anti-government views. Alongside the 2010 Constitutional changes, these developments dismantled the Kemalist hegemony in the judiciary and military, undermining the checks on the AKP's power. After these reforms, Erdoğan's former allies had clearly seen to have outlived their usefulness and were no longer essential. Erdoğan had no qualms about severing ties with them when they criticized him, which he did in due course. In other words, after these reforms, Erdoğan's old allies had fulfilled their duty and their importance was gone. In case of any criticism, Erdoğan had no problem to cut them off, which eventually he did (Yilmaz et al. 2023a).

Islamists and Contingent Nature of Their Ideology

An analysis of the Turkish Islamists' ideological framework during this period reveals the flexible nature of their ideological positions in political debates in Turkey. In the early 2000s, Islamists framed their ideology as inherently democratic, portraying their social conservatism as having a natural democratic character regardless of dominant political structures. This was exemplified by then-Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan's statement, "If the EU does not open chapters for Turkey to fulfill the Copenhagen Criteria, we will turn the Copenhagen Criteria into Ankara Criteria and carry out the same reforms".

Subsequent events showed that the seemingly democratic and pluralistic positions of the AKP governments were primarily a product of the political context of the time, subject to change based on strategic calculations. When the AKP government faced opposition from civilian protesters in Gezi Park, Erdoğan not only cracked down brutally on the protesters but also shifted his stance on liberalism, democracy, freedom

[1] The EMASYA Protocol was introduced in 1997 as part of the February 28 process and was instrumental in pursuing Islamists out of power at the time. The protocol allowed the military to intervene in social incidents without any civilian authorization.

of speech, and EU accession. The Gezi Park Protests emerged as a response to the AKP's increasingly aggressive and dominant political style (Günay and Dzihic 2018, 14). Erdoğan quickly branded the protesters as "looters, bums, and rodents", dismissing their concerns (Lancaster 2014, 184). Rather than seeking conciliation and compromise, Erdoğan chose a provocative and inflammatory approach, resorting to conspiracy theories and exploiting the Turkish people's historical fears by claiming that the European Union, the United States, the West, and special interest groups (a proxy for world Jewry) were orchestrating the Gezi protests. He alleged that these foreign powers were envious of Turkey and sought its destruction (Lancaster 2014, 184).

In December 2013, wiretaps exposed widespread corruption within the AKP government. But instead of allowing the judicial process to proceed, the government countered these accusations with outlandish claims of a plot to overthrow the Erdoğan regime, orchestrated, it was claimed, by a Gülenist parallel state controlled by "a superior mind" and "foreign hubs" (standard Islamist euphemisms for the United States and world Jewry). Police officers and members of the judiciary involved in the investigation were accused of being part of a "parallel structure". Soon after, the police officers responsible for the December 17–25 operations were arrested. Concurrently, Gülen movement institutions implicated in airing corruption allegations were subjected to intimidation and ultimately asset seizure.

The AKP government also supported the Kurdish democratic opening processes during the late 2000s and early 2010s, recognizing the Kurds' right to free expression. The AKP governments initiated the Kurdish opening (Kürtaçılımı)[2] between 2009 and 2012 and the resolution process (*çözümsüreci*)[3] between 2013 and 2015. During these processes, the AKP distanced itself from the Turkish nationalist discourse supported by the CHP and MHP, which denied any Kurdish political and cultural rights. These ideological positions helped the AKP gain support from

[2] "The reform steps involved the establishment of Kurdish studies centres at universities, the renaming of Kurdish villages with their original names, the use of languages other than Turkish in courts and the establishment of a public Kurdish-language television channel" (Grigoriadis and Dilek 2018, 292).

[3] "The resolution process officially started in January 2013 when a group of HDP members visited Ocalan in his prison in Imralı island. This was followed by the partial demobilization of PKK members and their withdrawal to neighbouring countries in the east and south-east, mainly Iraq and Syria" (Grigoriadis and Dilek 2018, 292).

liberal intellectuals critical of the Kemalist regime's discriminatory practices. The Kurdish opening and resolution process provided the AKP with a moral advantage over its rivals. On paper, the resolution processes aimed to end the Turkish-Kurdish low-intensity civil war by granting Kurds basic cultural and collective rights. The prospect of a peaceful Turkey, reconciled with its minorities, was extremely appealing to liberal intellectuals domestically and Western observers internationally (Yilmaz, Demir and Shipoli 2022).

Later developments revealed that the seemingly democratic and pluralist ideological positions of the AKP governments were primarily due to political contingencies and subject to change based on strategic calculations. When Erdoğan realized in 2015 that the Kurdish political movement, represented by the HDP, would not support his presidential bid, he made a complete reversal on the Kurdish issue and aligned with the ultra-nationalist MHP. Erdoğan ordered the arrests of hundreds of HDP members, ostensibly for alleged links to terrorist groups, while towns and cities in predominantly Kurdish provinces suffered destruction due to conflicts between the state and the PKK organization (Öktem and Akkoyunlu 2016). With support from the Kemalist CHP, he managed to strip HDP parliament members of their immunity and imprison them. He incarcerated their co-chairs, members of parliament, and elected mayors in Kurdish-populated towns, replacing them with his appointed trustee-mayors.

Erdoğan's journey from democracy to populist authoritarianism and from pluralism to ultra-nationalism demonstrates that his ideological positions were primarily products of strategic calculations. This highlights Erdoğan and the AKP's capacity for "instrumentalizing peace and democracy in building an authoritarian government" (Özpek and Yasar 2018, 211) between 2002 and 2015, a "novel phenomenon" in political science. Another notable characteristic of the AKP and Erdoğan is their ability to form coalitions with diverse segments of society, from Kurdish to Turkish nationalists, pro-Western to pro-Eurasian groups, and from Gülenists to communist-nationalists (or even the pro-Russian, self-declared communist party of Turkey). Although Erdoğan's actions can be seen as cynical, they also exemplify his considerable political skill and pragmatism.

The 2016 Coup Attempt and the End of Democracy in Turkey

The coup attempt on July 15, 2016, has become the most crucial and troubling event in recent Turkish history. While the **involvement of Gulenists** in the coup is proven by several international reports, the truth behind the coup, including the full identity and purpose of its perpetrators, remains unknown to this date. An EU intelligence report argued that although Gulenists were involved in the coup, the attempt was a product of a group of officers that belong to various ideological strata, including Kemalists, NATO-ists, nationalists, as well as Gulenists within the Turkish Armed Forces. Nonetheless, the AKP government's propaganda put the entire blame on the Gulenists and officially designated Gulen himself as the sole perpetrator of the event. This led to the mass purge of hundreds of thousands of members, and alleged associates, of the Gulen movement inside and outside Turkey at the hands of the brutal state apparatus. Erdoğan called the coup attempt a "gift of God" that allowed him to crack down on media, academic, and bureaucratic opposition. As Freedom House report noted in 2018, "more than 150 media outlets were closed in the months after the attempted coup in 2016. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, a total of 73 journalists were behind bars as of December 2017, making Turkey the world's worst jailer of journalists for the second year in a row". Erdoğan then targeted the secularist media. The well-known CEO and executive editor of the Cumhuriyet newspaper and its correspondents and columnists were arrested in 2018. In another trial, the prosecutor asked the owner of the Sozcu newspaper to be sentenced to 30 years. Even the pro-AKP media moguls struggled under the pressure placed upon them by the regime. For example, Aydın Doğan, the biggest media mogul in Turkey, tired of Erdoğan's pressure and sold his media empire to an Erdoğan backed businessman. The same climate of fear saw Turgay Ciner announce he would cease printing his newspaper Haberturk. Erdoğan developed a 'pool' of media owners, where everyone put money down and bought Turkey's leading media by getting incredibly lucrative loans from state banks. And since then, very year, those media patrons have their taxes forgiven by the state—not only the taxes of their media companies but of their other businesses as well.

Moreover, during 2017 and 2018, not only were many of the HDP's local leaders and lawmakers were jailed on terrorism charges, but the

leader of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtas, was also arrested. Almost all elected executive officials of the HDP at the municipal level have been replaced with government appointees. Erdoğan's regime even imprisoned some lawmakers from the main opposition party CHP, such as Enis Berberoğlu and Eren Erdem, and this was all made possible with CHP's votes to strip the HDP members of parliament from their immunity. Last but not least, Osman Kavala, a prominent civil society leader and philanthropist, was arrested, along with many other civil society leaders, philanthropists, indeed anyone who refused to support Erdoğan's increasingly authoritarian rule.

The net effect of these changes has seen Turkey rapidly spiral downwards to become a country where the principle of accountability has very little meaning, at least for those associated with Erdoğan. Instead, the state-supported building contractor system has focused on multiplying their profits by means of "zoning tricks", and large-scale corruption once again became endemic. A newly aggressive nationalist discourse began to assert itself following the Gezi Park Protests in mid-2013 and reached fever pitch after the mysterious failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016. Tayyip Erdoğan has used this nationalist discourse to explicitly demonize and criminalize his critics.

During this period, Erdoğan was further strengthening his authoritarian rule via referenda. "In April 2017, a government-backed package of constitutional amendments was formally approved through a referendum". The main idea behind the package was to "radically increase the power of the presidency and reduce democratic checks and balances" (Freedom House 2018). The package was fully implemented after the June 2018 election, which resulted, as expected, in another landslide election victory for the AKP-MHP coalition. After the election, Erdoğan got rid of the last qualified cabinet members of the AKP era (such as Mehmet Şimşek) and appointed his son-in-law as finance minister instead. From that moment on, Turkey has been under de facto and de jure one-man rule. As Ihsan Yılmaz (2015; Yilmaz and Bashirov 2018), Tanıl Bora (2017, 503–505) and Ahmet İnsel (2018) asserted, the hegemony and the cult of Erdoğan is so powerful and pervasive, it can only be compared with the cult of personality established by Atatürk. Indeed, now Erdoğanism, rather than Kemalism, has effectively become the official ideology of Turkey.

It was important to analyse all of this processes in a chronological order because the development and consolidation of Erdoğanist authoritarianism in Turkey was the work of a marathon and not a sprint. Today, Erdoğan has had his way with managing actors and parties across the entire political spectrum, leaving no group in Turkey that he hasn't targeted at one time and allied with at another. He and his clan now control every aspect of life in Turkey, from the mosques through Diyanet, to the schools through the Ministry of Education and the Imam Hatip schools, to the universities through the largest academic purge in history and through the YOK. He controls Turkey's major businesses, its media, and one of his sons in law is the Minister of Finance, while the other is a private defence contractor who receives important defence tenders from the Turkish state. Erdoğan has appointed trustees to private businesses and bankrupted them or alternatively taken them over. He has imprisoned people with no concern for their age or health. And he has done all of these in the name of God and religion, and by using Islamist conspiracies that the whole world (especially the world Jewry and the West) is attacking him because they don't want a Muslim strong man that can stand against them. These conspiracies, as we will describe later in the chapter, form an important part of his overall populist discourse, which constructs antagonistic relationships between 'the people' of Turkey, and their alleged enemies: 'elites', the Judeo-Christian west, Kurds, secularists, and Gulenists (Yilmaz and Morieson 2021, 10).

For some time in the 2000s, the activism of the Gülen movement in Turkey appeared to have made remarkable progress in building a more democratic and liberal understanding of Islam and state-society relations in Turkey (Barton et al. 2013; Yilmaz et al. 2007; Esposito and Yilmaz 2010a). In hindsight, however, the movement was mistaken about an issue which became been the Achilles heel of the Gülen movement: the movement's passion for securing bureaucratic positions. The Gülen movement legitimized this passion by claiming it is a defence reflex against the Kemalist oligarchy. The managing elite of the movement in Turkey considered it a patriotic duty to serve the state and be present in decision-making on the future of Turkey, and thus to be able to counter the Kemalist oligarchy who, they felt, did not serve the state but rather their own interests. The social and political conditions in which the Gulen movement emerged in the 1960s Turkey played a key role in shaping the secretive and paranoid mindset of the Gulenists. In the Cold War context of the times, Gulen decided to not involve himself in open party

politics, but attempted to capture the state from within with the help of his followers in state bureaucracy. He considered capturing the state bureaucracy a safer route, and the bureaucracy a place where he (and his movement) could hide their true identity yet increase their social and political power.

By the early 2000s the Gulen movement had gained considerable bureaucratic power**,** thanks to many of its well-educated followers in key positions. While the movement was far from capturing the state, the contrast with the Islamists was very stark as the latter did not have any credible following within the bureaucracy. This kind of bureaucratic organizational power (in addition to Gülen movement's international connections, secular connections, and media network) was what AKP sought when it came to power in 2002 (Bora 2017, 508). The AKP and Erdoğan lacked human resources, lacked international relationships, lacked a media network, and lacked relations with other political groups. All of which the Gülen movement had at their disposal through the human capacity building they had started nearly 30 years ago with high school and college students. As a result, the AKP and the Gülen movement forged a symbiotic relationship between 2005 and 2011 (Bora 2017, 481). The Gülen movement was a gold-mine for human resources for the AKP, and Erdoğan treated it as such while he could make use of it. The AKP, on the other hand, was an important asset that the Gülen movement supported but never truly controlled. The Gulenists had been continuously prosecuted or at least view with suspicion by earlier regimes, and so they saw the early period of AKP rule as a time in which they could relax and breathe a little easier. This is perhaps why the Gülen movement failed to detect the leading indicators of the AKP's turn to populist authoritarianism before 2012, only becoming aware when it was too late to combat.

Beginning in 2012, the AKP launched a low-intensity purge against key members of Gulen movement in the bureaucracy. It appears Erdoğan had started to believe at this time that he had acquired enough human capital and no longer required any affiliation with the Gülen movement. He opened an international educational organization, led by his second son, and attempted to intimidate countries into handing over the Gülen-affiliated high schools to AKP government control. He also appears to have believed that many of the Gülen-affiliated bureaucracy would switch and support the AKP instead. When this did not occur, and following the events of 17–25 December 2013, when it became clear that Erdogan

was facing far-reaching charges of systemic corruption the AKP moved to implement a full-fledged purge. And after July 15, 2016 coup attempt, when some in the bureaucracy, certain businessmen, and several foreign countries refused to bow to Erdoğan's requests that they support his purge of the Gulenists, the AKP initiated a powerful witch-hunt against the movement.

The incident of 15 July 2016 was a major turning point in modern Turkish history, not only because it rapidly evolved into a full-fledged witch-hunt against the Gülen movement—ultimately dooming the movement and with it civil Islam in Turkey—but because it gave Erdoğan carte blanche to crackdown on all opposition to his rule. Following the alleged coup attempt, Erdoğan moved swiftly to place all blame for the events on the Gülen movement, using it as a pretext to securitize the movement and begin jailing tens of thousands of its supporters (Yilmaz et al. 2023a, 87–88). Following the 15 July incident, "fifteen universities have been closed, and more than 5,000 academics had lost their positions by early 2017". Moreover, "the government has cracked down on NGOs since the coup attempt, summarily shutting down at least 1,500 foundations and associations and seizing their assets". By "late 2017, more than 4,000 judges and prosecutors had been removed". "By mid-2017, authorities had seized a total of more than $11 billion in property and companies ranging from corner stores to huge conglomerates. Assets of closed NGOs have also been turned over to the state" (Freedom House 2018). Thus, after the failed coup, Turkey found itself dealing with a full-fledged political one-man show which brought political crisis, economic crisis, social crisis, and extreme polarization to Turkey.

The Gülen movement has effectively been dismantled in Turkey, and many of its schools in neighbouring Turkic, Balkan, and Middle Eastern countries have been shut down by authorities. The movement's activities now primarily persist in Western countries, where local authorities have resisted the Turkish government's pressure to close Gülen-linked institutions and extradite Gülenist officials to Turkey. And, despite being victimized by the authoritarian AKP government, the Gülen movement has simultaneously also lost the trust and sympathy of many observers for several key reasons.

Firstly, the movement's zeal for acquiring bureaucratic positions had compromised its civilian character. One expert on the movement had suggested (albeit indirectly) that the movement must not seek bureaucratic power any longer. He argued that this approach could potentially

evolve into a different form of Islamism—one that pursues bureaucratic rather than political power (Yilmaz 2016). Today, following the extensive purge, the Gülen movement's bureaucratic organization has been reduced to ashes. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that the movement's leaders have learnt from this bitter experience that they were mistaken to have allowed themselves to become so infatuated with bureaucratic power. A public declaration by Gülen himself, urging his followers to refrain from pursuing any bureaucratic positions, especially in the near future, would be immensely beneficial. Such a statement would demonstrate a change in direction for the movement and help rebuild trust with observers and the wider public.

Crucially, the Gülen movement slowly but surely broke its promise to remain detached from party politics. By blindly supporting the AKP in the 2000s, the movement inadvertently paved the way for the party's populist authoritarian shift. Gülen himself provided unconditional support for Erdoğan's call for a 2010 referendum to change the constitution in a manner that would consolidate AKP's power. Additionally, the movement's leaders developed close ties with the AKP elite, becoming entangled in numerous questionable political deals. Although Gülen denied the existence of an organic alliance with Erdoğan, the movement was widely perceived as being a loyal ally of the Erdoğan government. This perception led to the alienation of various other religious and secular groups in Turkey, ultimately resulting in the movement's stigmatization. To regain trust and credibility, the Gülen movement must distance itself from partisan politics and focus on its original principles of promoting education, interfaith dialogue, and community service.

When Erdoğan decided to abandon democracy, the European Union accession process, and good governance and turned into an Islamist authoritarian leader, he expected that everyone, especially his old allies, would continue to support him (Yilmaz et al. 2017; Yilmaz and Bashirov 2018). But following this authoritarian turn the Gulen movement could no longer did not support Erdoğan, because his Islamist populist authoritarianism was against the core values of the movement, and furthermore because Erdoğan's demands required the movement to relinquish its autonomy and re-establish itself under Erdoğan's command. Failing to secure the Gulenists' obedience, Erdoğan began to prosecute the movement, shut down its institutions, and purge its followers from state institutions. Following the 2016 alleged coup attempt, the Erdoğanist

regime has purged and persecuted the Gulen movement on a scale previously unknown. The case of the Gulen movement in Turkey has taught us two things. First, that it is very difficult to remain apolitical in Turkey. Second, even temporary and limited engagement in Turkish politics can cause an Islamic civil movement great harm. Indeed, the Gulenists' political engagement with the AKP regime cost the Gulen movement virtually everything.

This brings us to our final point. The Gulen movement's secretive core structure must be addressed. Following the 15th July coup attempt, there was a large amount of state propaganda claiming a Gulenist cabal within the state structure and civil society, and subsequently a process akin to a Stalinist purge occurred, replete with mock trials. It needs to be recognised, however, there was also a kernel of truth in the accusation that the Gulen movement had acted with unnecessary obstinacy and secrecy in its dealings. Well before the coup, critics had raised concerns about the movement's secretive nature. For example, Şerif Mardin (2010) famously described the Gulen movement as akin to 'an Islamic Freemasonry,' focused on creating an extensive educational empire. Despite advocating democracy and transparency in the political sphere, the movement itself does not have internal democracy or transparency in its dealings. In the past, given the secularist autocratic nature of the Turkish state, the clandestine structure of the movement might have been an understandable, and even necessary, measure. It now needs to be acknowledge, however, that, the Gulenists failed to reform the structure and culture of the movement to embrace a more democratic and transparent fashion during the years when Turkey was making democratic progress. If Gulenists wish to construct a global civil society movement today, this undemocratic structure must be reformed. If Gulen were to push harder for transparency and accountability principles within the movement, the movement would be better positioned to realize its potential. After all, movements that deal in secrecy are always open to misusing their power. In the case of the Gulen movement, this secrecy has led to shady political engagements, a lack of financial accountability, and the concentration of power in the hands of a small number of particularly charismatic companions of Fethullah Gulen.

Like other Islamic groups across the Muslim world, the Gulen movement's successes and reformist character have been challenged by political engagement and power politics. And like all other Islamic movements in Turkey, the Gulen movement does not have clear and established standards, practices, goals, and values. This prevents them from being

accountable, transparent, and open, and has helped lead to their propensity for secrecy and paranoia. If the Gulenists intend to continue to strive to become a worldwide Islamic movement, say like the Jesuits are for Christianity, they will need to adopt to these standards sooner rather than later.

The Rise of Populist Islamism in Turkey

Today, the AKP government has completed its transformation into a populist authoritarian Islamist regime, in the process coming to represent the pinnacle of populist Islamism globally. Starting with its second term in power, the AKP's Islamist agenda gradually resurfaced in its official rhetoric and actions (Eligür 2010). After consolidating its power and seizing control of the state in 2011, the AKP embarked on an ambitious project to Islamicize Turkish society and politics.

It is important to clarify that we are not arguing that Turkey has become a theocratic regime under the AKP, nor that it is on the path to becoming one. In fact, the religious establishment in Turkey remains entirely subordinate to political authorities and holds no independent stance on political matters (Yilmaz et al. 2021; Yilmaz and Albayrak 2021). Instead, the political regime utilizes Islam as a means to gain and maintain political power, particularly as a tool to legitimize their rule and political agenda.

For instance, during the corruption scandal, a prevalent urban myth among the public was that Erdoğan and his associates amassed significant wealth through money laundering, intending to use the funds for two noble purposes. First, to establish a government in exile should the Kemalists oust the AKP from power. Second, to provide financial assistance to Muslim groups outside of Turkey. Erdoğan purposefully backed individuals in academia, media, and business who propagated these claims.

It is crucial to understand that while Islamists generally claim adherence to 'universal' notions of Islam, their particular doctrines invariably tend to stem from their national contexts. This is because their religious and political vocabulary is typically shaped by nationalist narratives. The worldviews of Islamist organizations, movements, and parties are further influenced by the political struggles they engage in within a particular country. Thus, if a country has a history of hosting an Islamic empire, such as the Ottoman or Safavid, Islamists tend to idealize them in

their search for ideal reference points. Similarly, the ideal form of government can be an Ottoman Sultanate, a Sunni Caliphate, or a Shia Imamate, depending on national identities. Consequently, in Turkey, the ultimate aspiration of Turkish Islamists is a Neo-Ottomanist Islamist utopia where a Muslim Sultan rules over Muslims worldwide under Sharia law that follows Turkish, rather than Arab (or Salafi), Islam.

In this context, it is entirely unsurprising that Erdoğanism in Turkey emphasizes the Ottoman past and the glorification of Turkish-Ottoman history as its ideological foundation. As Saraçoğlu and Demirkol (2015, 307) demonstrate, "Sunni-Muslim values… have become the core element defining what the 'nation' is" during the AKP period. Nostalgia for the Ottoman past has long been an Islamist and nationalist narrative in Turkey. The Islamist ideal in Turkey is the regime of the Ottoman classic period, while for nationalists, it represents one of the many sources of Turkish national pride. Historically, they sought to traditionalize society "by creating an invented ideal Ottoman society that would serve as a model for restructuring the present and the future" (Yavuz 1997, 34), and this has been advocated by the initial Islamist cadre of the AKP, including Abdullah Gul, Bulent Arinc, and most notably, Ahmet Davutoglu. The AKP has implemented this neo-Ottomanist ideology in both domestic and foreign policy. As a result, unique Ottoman motifs have been revived in national education, national holidays, media, TV shows, and foreign policy. However, the architects of this neo-Ottoman ideology have now been purged from the party. The neo-Ottoman discourse seems to be serving Erdoğan well, although his history of political opportunism suggests he would completely abandon it if it were no longer effective.

The regime has gradually but persistently challenged the secular principles upon which state-society relations in Turkey were founded. A significant aspect of this project involved creating an ideal Turkish citizen, a task first undertaken by the Kemalists in Turkey (Yilmaz 2013, 2015). In pursuit of this objective, the regime sought to establish "a pious generation" that would serve its ideological goals, employing the Diyanet (Directorate of Religious Affairs) as a social engineering tool for this state ideology (Lüküslü 2016; Yilmaz and Barry 2018). Additionally, the regime revamped the Turkish education system to advance its Islamist ideology and "capture the minds" of Turkish youth. The national education curriculum was stripped of philosophy, secular principles, and Darwin, and instead filled with religion and history courses that glorify

jihad and martyrdom (Kandiyoti and Emanet 2017; Yilmaz 2018, 2021; Demir and Isik, 2023).

The AKP's Islamism was also evident in the party's foreign policy. Following what is widely referred to as the failed 2016 coup, the AKP government became increasingly anti-Western. The party even accused the US and EU of orchestrating the 'coup attempt' at one point. During the 2017 referendum campaign, Erdoğan intentionally heightened tensions with European governments to exploit the anti-Western sentiments of his conservative base. He even "referred to the Dutch government as Nazi remnants and fascists" (Schaake 2018, 29). Notably, Erdoğan reintroduced religio-civilizational animosity against the West in his rhetoric. Today, Erdoğan and his media continuously propagate the notion of a holy war between Muslims and the Judeo-Christian West, asserting that the latter is determined to destroy the former. The primary narrative is that if Erdoğan falls, Islam and the entire ummah will fall with him. He portrays himself as the last bastion of Islam against the "crusaders"(Yilmaz and Demir 2023). Similarly, Erdoğan employs blatant Sunni sectarianism in his rhetoric, which consistently pits Sunnis against Alevis both within and outside Turkey (Karakaya-Stump 2018). In this rhetoric, he vilifies Alevis and other non-Sunni communities, insinuating that they are pawns of the West and the crusaders who seek to harm Erdoğan, Turkey, and consequently, the ummah and Islam itself (Yilmaz et al. 2017).

Erdoğan's populist rhetoric thus played a key role not only in legitimizing his regime but also in creating the antagonistic relationships between groups populism requires to succeed. In the 2010s, and especially after the failed coup attempt, Erdoğan claimed that Turkish Muslims were threatened (vertically) by secularist elites, and (horizontally) by internal and external non-Muslim enemies (Yilmaz and Morieson 2021, 10). Using emotive language, the party provoked public anger against elites and fear of non-Muslim 'others', both of whom were described as enemies of the ummah (Yilmaz and Morieson 2021, 10). Secularists, Gulenists, and Kurds were targeted by the AKP, and framed as internal enemies of Islam and 'the people' (Yilmaz 2021; Yilmaz et al. 2023a). By defining 'the people' of Turkey in Islamic terms as the ummah, the AKP was able to couch the populism's characteristic vertical and horizontal antagonistic relationships within a religious-civilizationalist framework. In this framework, Muslims throughout the world were under attack from the Christian west and secularism, and the AKP and its leader, Erdoğan,

were mounting a defence of Islam and the Turkish people (Yilmaz and Morieson 2021, 10). This religious-civilizational framing proved advantageous to the AKP, which used it to legitimize their dictatorship and Islamist agenda, and to consolidate power.

Radical İslamism in AKP Rhetoric: Martyrdom, Takfirism, and Jihadism

The AKP's approach to Islamism has transformed into a radical narrative that heavily emphasizes martyrdom and mass sacrifice to defend Islam and Turkey against perceived enemies, both domestic and foreign. This narrative, marked by populist agitation, has seen motifs of martyrdom and sacrifice become central to the AKP's youth policies, especially after the 2016 coup attempt, where they've taken on an almost cult-like significance (Yilmaz and Bashirov 2018; Yilmaz and Erturk 2021). This involves the display of billboards featuring images of those who perished in the failed 'coup', alongside constant media coverage of their funerals, often accompanied by emotionally charged stories of the tragedy. Additionally, numerous streets, bridges, schools, and buildings have been renamed in honour of 'the July 15 Martyrs,' further embedding their memory into the nation's landscape.

A growing trend AKP ruled Turkey has been the rising status of regime-connected religious scholars such as the former head of Diyanet Mehmet Görmez and columnist/scholar Hayrettin Karaman, who have become instrumental in legitimizing the regime's policies through various Islamic injunctions, fatwas, and declarations. Both Görmez and Karaman utilized a jihadist Takfiri rhetoric to demonize the regime's opponents such as the Kurdish nationalists and the Gülenists, and label them as 'out of Islam' and 'heretics'. Islamist scholar Hayrettin Karaman emerged as the religious ideologue of the hard-line Islamists with his personal fatwas that he issued in his column in a pro-government daily, YeniSafak. In the aftermath of the 17–25 December 2013 investigations that revealed blatant corruption of top-level AKP bureaucrats, Karaman (2014) issued a fatwa, declaring that 'corruption is not a theft'. Karaman (2017) also declared that voting 'Yes' was a religious obligation in the April 2017 referendum, effectively labelling the 'No' voters heretics. Furthermore, Karaman played an important role in providing religious justifications for the rise of the security state and extrajudicial activities that emanated from it. He issued a fatwa in 2017 in which he asserted that the vile crimes

of those who support Erdoğan and his regime cannot be prosecuted, because Muslims in Turkey are under attack by anti-Muslim forces both inside and outside (Karaman 2017). These and similar fatwas and declarations have opened the way for Turkish jihadists attack innocent people imply by labelling them as others, heretics, Gülenists, etc.

While the Turkish jihadists have been on the rise, so too have been the attacks by ISIS sympathizers in Turkey (Barton 2015; Yilmaz 2023). Nevertheless, numerous pro-ISIS preachers, and even some ISIS militants involved in the attacks themselves have been freed on bail. Any time that the Turkish government organizes an operation against ISIS cells in Turkey, they are freed within days. The Hamas linked party, HUDAPAR, has publicly endorsed Erdoğan as the candidate they will vote for the last presidential elections. When the civil war in Syria began to tip into series of energetic insurgencies dominated by Islamist militant groups the Erdogan government actively backed al-Qaeda affiliates such as Jabhat al-Nusra. They were provided with logistical support and supplies in northern Syria and safe havens in Turkey. As the split opened between al-Qaeda and ISIS in 2013/2014 the Erdogan regime aligned itself with al-Qaeda. Nevertheless, it continued to display a permissive attitude to ISIS. This contributed to a dynamic in which tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters were able to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq by transiting through Turkey. These and other cases show a thin line between the Erdoğan regime and the jihadist movements, which will be a subject of a whole new manuscript.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the factors contributing to the rise of the AKP, its populist Islamist takeover of Turkey, and the accompanying decline of civil Islam. We illustrated how the economic and social crises of the 1990s and early 2000s eroded the legitimacy of the Kemalist regime in the public's eyes. The AKP capitalized on this growing disillusionment by presenting itself as a democratic, Islamic, pluralist, and pro-EU alternative to Kemalism.

Under the leadership of Tayyip Erdoğan, the AKP embarked on a mission to reshape Turkey into an Islamic authoritarian state. Their ideology rests on populist and neo-Ottoman Islamist conceptions of the people, the state, and Islam's role in Turkey's domestic and international

affairs. The party employs state power to portray Erdoğan as a caliph-like figure representing not just Turkish Muslims, but the entire ummah. Consequently, state propaganda presents Erdoğan as the ummah's champion and the guardian of Muslims against constant threats from their Jewish, Christian, secular, and Gülenist adversaries.

The AKP's Islamist populism has been remarkably successful, as the party has not only seized control of the state but also disseminated its populist Islamist ideology throughout almost all of Turkish society. In a classic populist manner, the AKP has undermined democratic norms, asserting a direct connection with 'the people' and claiming to be their most accurate representative. Furthermore, Erdoğan himself contends that he is synonymous with both the state and the Turkish people, framing any criticism of his rule as an assault on Turkey and 'the people'. Today, Erdoğan has become a dictator who imprisons dissidents and exploits Islam and Turkey's Islamic authorities to legitimize and perpetuate his populist dictatorship. The once-promising vision of Islamic democracy, which seemed attainable when the AKP assumed power in 2002, faded following the failed coup and the AKP's transformation into authoritarian religious populists.

Pluralism and democracy advocates in Turkey and the Islamic world can derive several crucial lessons from this account. First, civil Islamic groups must exercise caution when entering politics. The Gülen movement in Turkey was decimated by their venture into the political sphere for two reasons: it delegitimized them by contradicting their ostensibly apolitical stance, and it facilitated the rise of an Islamist group that ultimately annihilated the movement when it no longer needed Gülenist support to build social capital.

The Gülen movement's experience offers difficult lessons for civil Islamic groups' supporters. Gülenism advocated for democracy while acting covertly and maintained that Islam was non-political but attempted a gradual infiltration of Turkey's institutions and became deeply involved in politics during the AKP's early years in power. Civil Islam ultimately failed because it could not adhere to its own ideology and overcome its roots in conservative nationalism. Meanwhile, the AKP's populist Islamism triumphed in Turkey due to its adaptability, initially capitalizing on public resentment towards the Kemalist regime and later on public fear and anger towards Gülenists, secularists, and Western powers following Turkey's unsuccessful EU membership bid and the 2016 failed coup. The

outcome of the AKP's takeover of Turkey is a nation gripped by authoritarianism and populism, where elections have little significance, and a single individual has managed to exploit Islam and Turkey's Islamic state authorities to legitimize and maintain his dictatorship.

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CHAPTER 6

Post-suharto Democratization and State of Islamist Populism

Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of Indonesia's post-Suharto democratization era. We begin by exploring the economic and political factors that led to the collapse of the Suharto regime in May 1998. We then examine the role of Islamism in Indonesia and its relationship with democracy. While the majority of Islamic movements in Indonesia are moderate and socially conservative, some advocate for radical Islamist agendas and the creation of a theocratic government, while others represent reactionary conservatism. Our argument advances the reading that the suppression of Islamism during Suharto's regime allowed Islamic liberalism to emerge as a significant social movement. This repression also drove radical activism underground, validating Islamism as a moral opposition. Additionally, the removal of Islamist actors from politics led to an increased obsession with politics among Islamists.

The second part of the chapter delves into the recent rise of Islamist populism in Indonesia. We argue that the Islamic Defenders Front's (IPF) targeted agitation against the Chinese Christian Governor of Jakarta, Ahok, represents a concrete manifestation of illiberal, antidemocratic Islamist activism. We discuss how the instrumentalization of Islamist groups by bureaucratic elements in the post-Suharto era created the backdrop for their eventual rise to fame in the late 2010s. Finally, we conclude

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by addressing the future of democracy and good governance in Indonesia. Despite its successful transition to democracy, Indonesia has struggled with good governance indicators such as rule of law, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and voice and accountability. Indonesia has much work to do before it can be regarded as having reached the levels of good governance that the public expects.

Breakdown of the Suharto Regime and Return to Democracy

The collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 opened the way for the return of democracy to Indonesia (Barton 1997a). The regime had faced increasing criticism in the 1990s, with endemic corruption centred around the president's family and ongoing human rights violations committed by the military. Among the most influential critics of the regime were Abdurrahman Wahid, executive chairman of the traditionalist Islamic mass-based organization Nahdlatul Ulama, Nurcholish Madjid, a progressive intellectual, the Sultan of Yogyakarta, and Amien Rais, chairman of the modernist Islamic mass-based organization, Muhammadiyah (Barton 1994, 1995 1997, 1997b, 2001a; Barton and Feillard 1999).

When Suharto eventually resigned in May 1998, it was these leaders who pushed for free elections and democratic reform. Vice President B.J. Habibie became the head of the transitional government, and his surprising effectiveness and reformist approach earned him lasting credit (Barton 2013; Diprose and Azca 2020). One of his greatest achievements was the successful holding of free and fair elections in June 1999, marking a genuinely democratic and peaceful transition of power. The transition to democracy, however, was not without bloodshed and chaos. Over a thousand people were killed in violence in the lead-up to Suharto's resignation, and many more lost their lives in the years that followed. The sense of interregnum and general lawlessness allowed local grievances and certain elite political interests to incite violence in Maluku and Sulawesi. Serious outbreaks of communal violence in the key city of Ambon, in the Maluku island group, and in Poso, in Central Sulawesi occurred early in the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid, Indonesia's first democratically elected president, who was elected by the super parliament in October 1999 after

a surprising win over established opposition figure Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Indonesia's first president (Barton 2009, 2021; Bhakti 2004).

The remarkably reformist but notably chaotic Wahid presidency represented a continuing period of democratic transition (Barton 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2006). The aspirations and expectations of the general public were provided with a benchmark of what to expect from a democratic administration in terms of freedom of speech and the ending of political oppression. But the embattled president attempted to do too much with too little and lacked the political capital and capacity to push through to completion most of the reforms that he had started. Not only did he make enemies within the military, adding to the ranks of entrenched opposition from radical Islamists, he also refused to appease powerful figures within established political and business elites, while having to battle a self-serving legislature and a sclerotic civil service. His idealistic, maverick style and his refusal to do deals with the establishment ultimately saw him impeached and removed from office in July 2001 (Ramage 2002).

The Megawati administration that followed, serving for the remaining three years of the five-year presidential term, was, in most respects, more a caretaker presidency than a genuinely reformist presidency. At the time, this was welcomed by many Indonesians, but overall it did nothing to reduce the sense of Indonesia remaining 'a nation in waiting' (Barton 2008; Schwarz 1994). From mid-2001, when Megawati took office, until late 2004 when her part-term expired, Indonesia remained very much in the grip of a "multidimensional crisis". In 2004, another set of elections were successfully held, including for the members of parliament and, for the first time ever, for the direct election of the president by the people. The peaceful and constructive atmosphere that accompanied both elections and the clear 61 per cent mandate that Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono achieved against Megawati Sukarnoputri in the presidential elections appeared to have finally ushered in the beginning of democratic normalcy. Within months, however, Yudhoyono's honeymoon period had ground to a halt and public optimism began to fade as it became clear that the cautious new president was not going to make rapid progress that was hoped for in ending the "multi-dimensional" crisis (Liddle and Yujani 2005).

On December 26, 2004, one of the largest natural disasters in modern history introduced Indonesia to a different sort of crisis, as a massive earthquake off the west coast of Sumatra, in the northern province of Aceh, generated the most destructive tsunami ever recorded. More than 170,000 lives were lost in Aceh. Thankfully, President Yudhoyono displayed decisiveness in the wake of the disaster, immediately traveling to Aceh to assess the aftermath of the tsunami at first hand. With the assistance of his energetic vice president, Jusuf Kalla, was able to move remarkably quickly to open up the previously closed province to domestic and international aid (Miller 2008). This new openness contributed to the Yudhoyono government's success in securing a lasting end to the cycle of violence due to insurgency and military repression that had bedevilled the Aceh province for decades.

Islamism in Indonesia

In Indonesia, Islamists can be broadly divided into two groups: radical Islamists and moderate Islamists (Barton 2009, 2010). The ultimate aspiration of radical Islamists is for the complete transformation of Islamic society and establishment of a form of theocratic regime in Indonesia. The first incarnation of radical Islam in Indonesia was the Dar'ul Islam group that emerged in the late 1940s. In 1949, when most of the various revolutionary militia gladly laid down their arms and accepted the Indonesian independence, radical Islamist groups in the rugged mountains of Southern Sulawesi and West Java continued to fight for Dar'ul Islam or an Islamic state (Hilmy 2010). It took more than a decade for the new Indonesian state to defeat the Dar'ul Islam holdouts at the time.

The second group can be described as moderate Islamists. For them, it is important that Islam is recognized as the religion of the state and given a preeminent position. While they also speak of the implementation of the Shari'a, this does not imply the radical reinvention of the state. Rather, they demand its application in the key areas of family and personal law and the symbolic recognition of Islam as representing the foundation of the state. For many moderate Islamists in Indonesia, it would be sufficient for the Indonesian state to become like the Malaysian or Pakistani state in these two key areas of personal law and official symbolism. Symbolism is important to moderate Islamists in Indonesia because many of them are essentially social conservatives. They are fearful of rapid social change and the erosion of established values and mores, and they look to symbolic

issues, such as the inclusion of Islam in the constitution, as a barometer of society's commitment to Islam. Their concern for such matters is analogous to the concern felt by social conservatives in the West for flag, anthem, and social mores (Hefner 2011).

Most moderate Islamists are prepared to work through the democratic system to achieve their desired outcomes, and most reject violence and militant revolutionary doctrines. Not only do they find violence abhorrent, but they recognize that it is by winning political power through the party system and then changing legislation that they can best achieve lasting reform. Many, particularly among the ranks of the radical Islamists, are sophisticated and politically savvy, and are prepared to distinguish between short-term and long-term goals. They are convinced that, by working through the democratic process and steadily changing legislation, they can create the sort of incremental change that will eventually transform Indonesia's secular state into a properly Islamic one (Barton 2010).

Official Repression and Underground Development of Islamism

In order to understand the current condition of radical and moderate Islamists in İndonesia, it is crucial to look at the conditions under which they developed during the Suharto era. Official repression of Islamism during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, when Islamism was effectively neutralized along with every other oppositional ideology, achieved mixed results. The PPP, the Islamic-leaning political party established by the Suharto regime, was permitted to function because it served as a useful pressure valve for political frustrations and a safe channel for managing political ambitions, while helping maintain the fiction of Indonesian democracy. Nevertheless, the consistently strong electoral performance of PPP was a constant reminder to the Suharto regime that it was never going to control political Islam through force alone.

The effect of state control in the civil sphere, however, was much more mixed. On the one hand, the repression of Islamism helped provide the necessary environment for Islamic liberalism to develop into a significant social movement. Rather than pressure towards accommodation with the state producing Islamic liberalism, repression of Islamism allowed liberal

ideas to be openly developed and disseminated without the sort of intimidation that had seen like-minded Islamic intellectuals in other Muslim societies either silenced or forced abroad.

On the other hand, the official repression of Islamism, with its violent undertones, was also counter-productive. Driven underground in the authoritarian setting, Islamism became a powerful social movement on university campuses and within certain mosque and madrassa (religious day-school) communities. In its most extreme forms, radical Islamism found a latent network of supporters among the families of former Dar'ul Islam members. The imprisonment of the movement leaders only increased their influence among students angry at the injustices and corruption of the Suharto regime, who were hungry for simple solutions to complex problems. The al-Qaeda linked terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiyah, about which little was known prior to the 2002 Bali bombings had its origins in these circles.

More importantly, the banning of Masyumi under Sukarno and the neutering of its successor, Parmusi, under Suharto, had the effect of developing within certain Modernist Muslims an unhealthy obsession with politics and embittering them to the point where much of the intellectual vigour and creativity that had earlier marked the Modernist movement was extinguished. The obsession with political achievement and the 'Holy Grail' of the Jakarta Charter had the ironic effect of ensuring that modernism's most significant achievements were confined to the field of secular education, health care, and social service, while intellectually significant religious thought largely failed to develop within succeeding generations of young Modernists.

As they sought to give voice to their political aspirations, the hard-liners within the Modernist community found themselves blocked at every turn. In 1967, Suharto engineered an internal coup within Parmusi to ensure that former Masyumi leaders did not advance, and then set about making political Islam an object of ridicule and suspicion. As the danger of communism began to recede in the 1970s, Islamism and extremist Islamist politics began to replace communism in the demonology of Suharto's New Order regime. The result was that Islamist Modernists found opportunities for political engagement denied to them. As their isolation increased so too did their determination to change the political status quo (Vatikiotis 1998).

The result was the steady embitterment of many of modernism's brightest minds. Muhammad Natsir, the great Masyumi leader of the

1950s, responded by establishing the Islamic Preaching Council (Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia—DDII) in 1967, to act as a vehicle for advancing the interests of radical Islamist politics and blocking Christian expansion (Hefner 2000, 106–109; Liddle 1996). Unfortunately, the combined effect of an obsession with politics and the failure of the Modernists to provide sound theological education for their youth was to boost the growth of Islamist radicalism.

The impoverishment of religious thought among moderate Modernists in Muhammadiyah and elsewhere left the growth of both the underground Islamist movements and the small, officially tolerated conservative foundations funded by foreign Wahhabist institutions without effective competition for the hearts and minds of Modernist youth. Moreover, the international resurgence of interest in Islam, which contributed to the steady 'santri-fication' of Indonesian society, saw many students from *abangan* families drawn to 'controversial' Islamist groups, seduced by their simple answers to complex problems (Hefner 1997).

Radical Islamists in Indonesia

In Indonesia, there exists a smaller but determined group of radical Islamists for whom even short-term accommodation with secular democracy is unacceptable. Some of these groups, such as Indonesian followers of Hizbut-Tahrir, appear content to retreat from affairs of the state and maintain a quiescent approach to politics. But others, including many previously linked with Abu Bakar Bashir's Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI, or Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia), are committed to achieving their ends through violent means (Platzdasch 2009). Many of the militant radical Islamists, who might best be called Jihadi Islamists, were radicalized either through the experience of fighting the Soviets as part of the Mujahidin in Afghanistan, or more recently through participating in communal conflict in Maluku and Sulawesi. Most of those who have spent time in training campus and radical madrasah in Afghanistan and Pakistan have since become active within the al-Qaeda-affiliated Southeast Asian terrorist organization, Jemaah Islamiyah. Jihadi Islamism in Indonesia fortunately involves only a few thousand (with perhaps a few tens of thousands of fellow-travellers) activists of Indonesia's 240 million Muslims (Barton 2020).

The two major radical Islamist groups present in the Ambon conflict in the early 2000s were are Laskar Mujahidin and Laskar Jihad. Historically, Laskar Mujahidin had the best-trained and most lethal fighters in the conflict and was later revealed to be linked to the Salafi-Jihadi terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (Barton 2005, 2010, 2021; Barton et al. 2021; Vergani et al. 2022) and led by JI leaders who had fought and trained alongside al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Laskar Mujahidin was formally established in 1997 as an humanitarian aid agency by the Saudi-linked Islamist social activist organization Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII) in response to the 1997–1998 Asian Financial Crisis (Noorhaidi 2006, 32–55). KOMPAK's operations in Ambon were led by JI's Ari Munandar (having been established by JI Bali bomber Ali Imron). KOMPAK's humanitarian agency front proved useful cover to JI's militant operations in Ambon (Yilmaz and Morieson 2022).

Laskar Jihad was an extremist Salafi organization that helped to precipitate and expand communitarian violence between Muslims and Christians in Maluku, sending over 7,000 fighters into communal conflicts. Beginning in the early 2000s, Laskar Jihad and Laskar Mujahidin were involved in very serious violence in Ambon in eastern Indonesia that saw at least 9,000 lives lost and tens of thousands displaced (Elegant 2001; Sholeh 2006). In mid-2001, they become involved in communal violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi. The leader of Laskar Jihad, Jafar Umar Thalib, shut down the organization on October 17, 2002, when commanded to do so by his spiritual mentor in Saudi Arabia (Noorhaidi 2006, 225–226). Thalib had studied in Pakistan in the late 1980s and from there had become involved in training and fighting alongside the anti-Soviet mujahidin in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, he had met with senior al-Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin-Laden. After he returned to Indonesia, Thalib positioned himself as being critical of democracy but supportive of the government of President Habibie and of the Republic of Indonesia. As is so often the case with *ormas* bearing the title laskar, Laskar Jihad was backed, financed, protected, and directed by elements of the military and of the former Suharto regime in opposition to the authority of President Abdurrahman and the reformist government that he formed in October 1999 (Noorhaidi 2006, vi, 7, 101, 107, 110–115, 159). The goal of the regime elements was to challenge President Wahid, who was seen as liberal democratic threat to both military power and political Islam. Wahid's opponents in the military courted the support of

Islamist militants, who they desired to use as instruments with which to discredit and destabilize his presidency.

Islamist Populism in Indonesia

Examining the influence of radical Islamism in democratic politics in Indonesia is critical to understanding the instrumentalization of Islam within the political sphere. Radical Islamists represent a small minority of all *santri* Muslims in Indonesia and occupy one end of a broad spectrum of Islamic thought. Indonesians like to think of Indonesian Islam as being relaxed and tolerant. Pakistan, which for all its problems does have reasonably free and fair elections, makes for an interesting comparison with Indonesia. Radical Islamism represents a greater problem in Pakistani society than in Indonesian society. Nevertheless, in Pakistan's 2002 general elections, which were characterized by a significant increase in support for radical Islamist parties, MMA (Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal—United Action Front), a coalition of the country's six large Islamist parties, managed to garner only 11 per cent of the vote. This compares to Indonesia as in the 2004 Indonesian general elections, Indonesia's two radical Islamist parties, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS or PartaiKeadilan Sejahtera), and the Crescent Moon and Star Party (PBB or PartaiBulan Bintang) together achieved 10% of the vote, indicating that there exists a similar level of support in Indonesia for radical Islamist politics as there is in Pakistan. Moreover, the moderate Islamist PPP (United Development Party) and its splinter party, the Reform Star Party (PBR or Partai Bintang Reformasi), gained a further 11% of the vote, bringing the total share of the Islamist parties to 21% (Barton 2008; Fealy 2008).

In recent years, some prominent scholars of Indonesia, such as Vedi Hadiz (2016, 2018), have argued that there has been a substantial growth Islamic populism in Indonesia. In particular, Hadiz argued that rather than pluralism, democratic transition in Indonesia led to growing Islamic populism that is characterized by anti-pluralism and illiberalism. For Hadiz, Indonesian Islamic populism prospered, in part, because it was attentive to social justice issues and basically serves as a vehicle that brings together the ummah around unified interests in its struggle over power and resources against the 'other' socioeconomic groups in Indonesia, most importantly, the ethnic Chinese community that controls most of the national economy, but also the Communists. This ummah-based political identity 'makes available a cultural resource pool from which

cross-class alliances might evolve to bind a section of the populace in their grievances against perceived economic and cultural oppressors or sources of threat, whether domestic or foreign' (Hadiz 2018, 2). Islamic populism pressures the Indonesian 'ummah' to suspend the differences within the group and focus on the main socioeconomic enemies, the Chinese and the communists.

Hadiz's definition of populism understands it 'as a form of cross-class politics within which mutually contradictory social interests are temporarily nullified within broad alliances that are frequently tenuous and volatile' (Hadiz 2018, 3). He focuses on the political economic issues that bring diverse groups (of ummah, here) together, and recognizes Islamic idioms as cultural resources that bind these otherwise disparate groups. Whilst this model provides a neat fit for the analysis of Indonesian populism, comparative examinations of populism in the world have demonstrated that populism does not always emerge around unified socioeconomic interests. The latter can be but one issue that may bring various segments of a society around the populist cause. Instead, populism is better understood as an ideology that utilizes a distinct ideology that morally divides a society into good 'people' and bad 'elites' (or others) (for ideological perspective, see Mudde 2004; for discursive perspective, see Laclau 2005). The limitations of Hadiz's model become apparent with populist groups such as the now banned Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam—FPI). Since Hadiz recognizes the entire social conservative front as engaging in Islamic populism, radically divisive politics of groups like FPI which clearly promotes a **populist 'ideology'** severely different from major social conservative organizations in Indonesia gets lost within his framework. In order to overcome conceptual inadequacy, an ideological approach to populism should be adopted. This will allow us to abstain from labelling the entire social conservative politics as populism and instead focus on those ideologies that divide the society along us vs. them mentality.

Islamic Defenders Front (FPI)

Recognizing populism as an ideology or a set of ideas with vertical and horizontal dimensions also helps us to recognize how Islamist populists drive public support for populism. Indonesia's Islamist populists have indeed proven adept at constructing antagonistic us vs them relationships

between 'the people' and 'corrupt elites', and between Muslims and non-Muslims, and have benefited from the resulting division. For example, in Indonesia, an Islamist group that has played a significant role in recent populist agitation is the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI).

The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) was formed on August 17, 1998, just four months after President Suharto abruptly resigned ending more than three decades of military backed authoritarian rule (Elson 2001). Since the late 2000s, the FPI has increasingly played a prominent role in channelling and amplifying hateful extremism (Barton 2019), if not violent extremism (Wilson 2019; Woodward 2019a, 2019b). It has led overt, public, sectarian campaigns directed against minority groups such as the small Shia and the Ahmadiyah communities and against liberal Muslims, Christians, and members of the LGBTQI community.

The resignation of Suharto greatly changed Indonesian politics as the country transitioned to democracy, allowing Indonesian citizens the liberty, for the first time in decades, to form political parties (Nuryanti 2021; Yilmaz 2020; Fukuoka 2013). The change allowed religious parties to begin to participate in democratic politics. One of the earliest Islamist parties was the Islamic Defenders Front/Front Pembela Islam (FPI). The party was formed by Muhammad Rizieq Shihab in 1998, who remained active until the party was banned in 2020. A right-wing and ideologically Islamist party FPI became controversial after taking vigilante action to "save" Islam in Indonesia from "vice" through their moral policing activities (Amal 2020; Fossati and Mietzner 2019; Mietzner 2018). FPI and other Islamist groups were at times funded by the military during the final years of the Suharto regime. While ostensibly rivals, the nominally secular and non-sectarian Suharto regime used Islamists to attack anti-regime democracy movements, and moreover as part of an attempt to elicit support for his own increasingly Islamic brand of Indonesian nationalism. For example, Suharto claimed that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was an anti-Muslim and existential threat to Indonesia, and sought to destabilize the country (Hadiz 2016; Sukma 1995; Anwar 1994). While Suharto's fear-based attempt to remain in power failed, the Islamists would themselves soon begin to use fear to manipulate public emotions for political gain.

FPI's influence and capacity to publicly mobilize hateful extremism hit a new high with the mass demonstrations of late 2016 and early 2017 target against the Chinese Christian Governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, widely known by his Hakka nickname 'Ahok'. FPI

had several hundred thousand members and was able to mobilize many more non-members in open displays of hateful extremism. More importantly, FPI's mobilizational capacity represented a concrete manifestation of illiberal antidemocratic Islamist activism as it was able to channel the power of antidemocratic Islamist sectarianism (Barton 2021; Barton et al. 2021a, 2021b; Yilmaz and Barton 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; McBeth 2019; Sumaktoyo 2019).

The series of mass protests on the streets of Jakarta in late 2016 in early 2017 organized by the 212 movement, named after the largest of the street protests on December 2, 2016, that saw as many as 750,000 people occupy the central boulevard of the national capital, represented the most worrying manifestation of populist agitation so far in Indonesia's two decade-long democratic transition (IPAC 2018; Hatherell and Welsh 2017). The 212 protest movement was successful in destroying the political prospects of Ahok, the incumbent governor of Jakarta, in the April 2017 governor elections. Moreover, the show of force represented by the angry protests resulted in the sentencing of Ahok to two years on charges of blasphemy. Blasphemy prosecutions had been virtually unheard of up until the second five-year term of President Yudhoyono (2009–2014) in İndonesia. Over the past decade, however, such 'witch-hunts'—the vengeful instrument of sectarian hatred and political manipulation—have become all too common. How did FPI become this powerful in Indonesia?

Evidence suggests that the chief of Indonesian police in the late 1990s, Nugroho Djajusman, helped orchestrate the emergence of FPI because it was seen as a useful militia to serve as an instrument of the Indonesian police both in its ostensible law and order role and in protection of its business interests in the hospitality and entertainment sector. Key leaders within the Indonesian military also backed FPI's formation. FPI emerged in August 1998 to counter student demonstrations and to protect the government of BJ Habibie. A key early patron of FPI was General Kivlan Zein, a hawkish Soeharto loyalist.

After a somewhat shaky start, FPI began to frame itself as a loyal defender of the Republic of Indonesia that was committed to the preservation and development of its moral and religious character. Some FPI leaders recognized that it was important for the organization to avoid being labelled as a radical Islamist group opposed to the legitimacy of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia (IPAC 2018, 13–14; Wilson 2014, 3–4, 209). Henceforth, they defined FPI's core mission as being

the support of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia with the addition of the practice of Sharia (Islamic law).

While supportive of the Republic of Indonesia, FPI fervently demanded the introduction of the Shariah law and was heavily critical of democracy. "Democracy is more dangerous than pig's meat!" FPI leader Habib Rizieq Shihab famously declared during a speech in 2013 (Wilson 2014, 2). He argued that following democracy would turn Indonesians into "infidels". Throughout the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and especially during his second term, Islamist agitation and intimidation had been a growing force in Indonesian society and politics (Bruinessen 2013). The Islamists were bitterly disappointed with their failure to achieve the level of electoral success they believe to be their natural birthright and the will of God. They blamed this upon the evils of democracy and sought for alternative avenues for natural justice and manifest destiny. Similar to the situation in Pakistan and other Muslim-majority democracies, the inability of radical Islamist movements to attract voters has led to the adoption of bullying and intimidation tactics. These methods, often fueled by the personal ambitions of authoritarian populist politicians, manifest in street protests, public bullying, and movements aimed at intimidation.

The miscalculated policies of the Yudhoyono government also contributed to the rise of Islamist populism in Indonesia. In particular, Yudhoyono's granting of extralegal powers to the MUI both helped the promotion of Islamist ideas and allowed FPI to generate more power through its self-appointed role in this process. In both social and cultural terms and formal legal terms, the religious judgements or *fatwa* issued by MUI had no binding authority. Nevertheless, during Yudhoyono's two presidential terms, the president increasingly defered to MUI and acted as if MUI fatwa had legal force. "We want the MUI to play a central role with regards to Islamic doctrine", Yudhoyono announced in a 2005 speech, "and for matters where the state should listen to the fatwa from MUI and the ulama" (Suaedy 2016, 26, 164). The consequence of this was the strengthening of the illiberal and antidemocratic Islamist influence. Even with the President Yudhoyono's backing, MUI had no natural social mechanisms to mobilize for the recognition and enforcement of its religious rulings. FPI saw in this dynamic a perfect opportunity to align its NKRI Bersyar'iah and 'nahimungkar'—'forbidding evil' mission with the increasingly reactionary fatwa issued by MUI.

The result of this was that the second term of the Yudhoyono presidency was marked by a flurry of blasphemy charges supported by MUI and socialized on the streets by FPI. This set in place that the social dynamics were challenging the religious and social reforms championed by the Joko Widodo administration. Nevertheless, it wasn't until two years into that administration that the Ahok case presented perfect storm conditions for both MUI and FPI to significantly mobilize Islamist sectarian sentiment and openly challenge the reformist ethos of the president. Up until this point, MUI was seen as a self-important instrument of reactionary forces and the FPI as its thuggish enforcer. Two years after its failure in the 2014 elections, FPI showed much greater willingness to align with Prabowo' Gerinda party and campaign against Ahok in the 2017 Jakarta governor election, with a view, it appeared, to playing a clear supporting role on the side of Prabowo in the 2019 parliamentary and presidential election (Wilson 2015). The success the MUI and FPI achieved in their campaigns against Ahok came partly as the result of the religious populist politics, and in particular their ability to couch public grievances and anger towards both elites and non-Muslims within an Islamist civilizational framework. They elicited and exploited public anger towards Ahok's 'blasphemous' comments by claiming that Ahok was part of an elite which cared little for ordinary Indonesian Muslims, and also a non-Muslim outsider who was attacking the ummah. At the same time, they presented themselves as defenders of 'the people (or the *ummah*) from the 'elite' and the civilizational other as represented in the person of Ahok. Thus, while religious populism has not fared well at the ballot box, it remains a powerful and perhaps growing social and political force in Indonesia, capable of creating and exploiting feelings of anger and fear among ordinary Indonesians, and using them to force political change (Yilmaz and Barton 2022; Barton et al. 2022).

The FPI was, in many ways, the victim of its own success. The group was banned by the Indonesian government in December 2020, after being held responsible for a series of violent attacks (da Costa and Lamb 2020). Technically, however, the FPI was banned due to its violation of COVID-19 restrictions. Indeed, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rizieq Shihab returned home to Indonesia from exile in Saudi Arabia saying that he was going to lead a "moral revolution" in Indonesia. This "moral revolution" was built of the momentum of the 2016–2017 protests that promised to "save" Islam from the threats presented by non-Muslims and non-orthodox Muslims both in Indonesia and externally.

With his hard-line Salafi allies, Rizieq Shihab amassed huge crowds to whom he spoke while clad in FPI's iconic white robes. One his return to Jakarta, his welcome party at the airport saw thousands flock to the airport to welcome the "grand imam" (Maulia 2020). It can be argued that Rizieq Shihab chose a very calculated time to return to Indonesia, as anti-government sentiments ran high due to the worsening health conditions under the pandemic conditions and the latter's ramification on the economic activities in the country (Kelemen 2021). As the country's poorest suffered the most due to the pandemic, the FPI returned to its strongholds in rural peri-urban regions where its popularity is boosted by its community services and welfare provision for those neglected by the state (Kelemen 2021).

Disobeying state regulations designed to curb the pandemic, thousands of FPI supporters gathered at rallies, in which highly controversial remarks were made attacking the Indonesian state and promoting far-right Islamist populism. For example, in one of his speeches, while commenting on the beheading of a French school teacher by Muslim upset that students had been shown cartoons satirizing Islam and the Prophet Muhummad, Rizieq Shihab commented, "If they [those accused of blasphemy in Indonesia] are not investigated, don't blame Muslims if their heads are found in the streets tomorrow". Inciting violence, in line with the vigilantism of the group, these rallies became a concern for the Indonesian government, now struggling with surging cases of COVID-19. When the government asked the leadership of FPI, including Rizieq Shihab, to undergo COVID-19 tests, Shihab refused to attend a state run hospital and instead released his negative results from an Islamic hospital (Maulia 2020). The increasing support for FPI and its "moral revolution" was, by mid-2020, presenting a clear threat to the government. Equally, it was becoming clear that Islamist populism would play a key, and potentially defining, role in the 2024 elections (Kelemen 2021).

Reckless disregard for COVID-19 public gathering regulations, however, proved to be the FPI's undoing. The government was able to trace track a major COVID-19 cluster to the "moral revolution" rallies the group was holding. This gave the government the excuse to neutralize the threat posed by the Islamist populists, and they arrested Rizieq Shihab and imposed a ban on the FPI. The Islamist populist groups in Indonesia, particularly the FPI, didn't give up easily. In the days leading up to the arrests and the ban, the FPI leadership rallied its followers to confront the state police forces. This incitement led to violent clashes, which turned

into a significant crisis for President Jokowi. He faced criticism from many who believed he was exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to suppress his political adversaries. To be the pandemic suppress. Various comparisons were drawn between the events that led to the ban on FPI and the earlier ban on Hizbut Tahrir (HTI), another hard-line Islamist group that was outlawed and dismembered by the government in 2017 (Kelemen 2021). Since Rizieq Shihab's imprisonment, Indonesia's "moral revolution" social movement has come to a standstill. FPI has been banned and will not be able to play a role in the political arena. Nevertheless, both its ideology and its social networks live on within its supporters and it is likely that these will a to resurface in the 2024 elections (Yilmaz and Barton 2021a), perhaps in response to concerns about the tragic situation in Gaza and renewed attention paid to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as religious populism looks set to become a permanent fixture in Indonesian politics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the post-Suharto democratization era in Indonesia has been characterized by complex dynamics involving political, economic, and social factors. The collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 opened the door to a more democratic political system, but it also triggered a period of instability and violence. The relationship between Islamism and democracy has been a key aspect of Indonesia's political landscape, with the suppression of Islamism during Suharto's regime paving the way for the emergence of Islamic liberalism as a significant social movement (Barton 1994, 1995, 1997a, 1997b).

The repression of Islamism, however, also drove radical activism underground, leading to the validation of Islamism as a moral opposition. The recent rise of Islamist populism in Indonesia, exemplified by the Islamic Defenders Front's (FPI) agitation against the Chinese Christian Governor of Jakarta, Ahok, has highlighted the challenges facing Indonesia's democratic system. The instrumentalization of Islamist groups by bureaucratic elements in the post-Suharto era created the backdrop for their eventual rise to fame in the late 2010s, demonstrating the complex interplay between politics, religion, and social movements.

Despite its successful transition to democracy, Indonesia has struggled to improve its governance indicators, including rule of law, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and voice and accountability. As

Indonesia moves forward, it will need to address these challenges and work towards a more effective and accountable system of governance. Ultimately, the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia will depend on its ability to navigate these complex dynamics and build a more inclusive and sustainable political system that meets the needs and aspirations of all its citizens.

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CHAPTER 7

Democracy, Populism, and Religion: A Comparative Analysis of the Rise of Populist Islamism in Turkey and Indonesia

Introduction

In this chapter we review and summarize our findings in comparative manner to garner insights garner insights into the reasons for Turkey and Indonesia taking such divergent courses following a decade when it appeared that together they represented the hope for the consolidation of democracy in the Muslim world. In doing so, we will have illustrated how populist Islamists have proven themselves adept at seizing upon public anger towards often corrupt secular authoritarian regimes, and turning these negative emotions into public demand for populist solutions.

In conclusion, this book has offered a detailed and nuanced analysis of the rise of Islamist movements and their contribution to the dramatic decline of democracy in Turkey and the threat posed to democracy in Indonesia. Through a systematic exploration of the complex interplay between democracy, populism, and religion, we have shed light on the factors influencing the changing political landscape in these Muslim-majority countries. By establishing a solid conceptual foundation and clarifying our theoretical approach in the first two chapters, we set the stage for a deeper exploration of the historical and political developments that contributed to the rise of Islamism in Turkey and Indonesia. Chapters Three and Four provided a rich historical context, examining

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the ideological leanings of civil and political Islamists in these countries. The subsequent chapters delved into contemporary politics, with Chapter Five investigating the trajectory of the Islamist AKP in Turkish politics and Chapter Six examining the post-Suharto democratization era in Indonesia. Throughout the book, we emphasized the importance of protecting civil society and democratic values against the rise of populist Islamism, which has often been used as a tool for authoritarianism in Muslim-majority countries.

Finally, in this last chapter, we offer a comparative analysis of our findings, generating insights and stimulating further research and discussion on this important subject. Overall, we hope that this book has provided readers with a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the changing political landscape in Turkey and Indonesia and the intricate relationship between democracy, populism, and religion in these countries.

State of Democracy in Turkey and Indonesia

This concluding chapter, circles back to its central themes: populism, religion, and identity politics. Throughout the book, we have seen how populist Islamist actors pose a significant threat to democracy in both Indonesia and Turkey. Despite the presence of strong secular traditions in these countries, the rise of radical Islamist elements seeking to replace secularism with Sharia law is cause for concern.

Populist Islamists have been successful in capitalizing on public frustration with corrupt secular authoritarian regimes and have used this to advance their own agenda. The combination of populism and Islamic identity politics is a fundamental element of the AKP's ideology in Turkey and is becoming increasingly influential in Indonesia. While initially appearing to promote democratization, populist regimes in both countries have shown themselves to be hostile towards pluralism, rule of law, and separation of powers—essential elements for the functioning of a liberal democracy.

We demonstrate that while Islamist identity politics has dominated the political landscape in both countries, Islamists have yet to secure a significant democratic victory in Indonesia. However, the rise of global populist politics makes it challenging to envision a reduction in identity politics in many Muslim-majority countries. This book's comparative analysis sheds light on the intricate relationship among religion, populism, and

democracy in Muslim-majority nations. It highlights the crucial importance of protecting democratic principles and civil society from the rising challenges posed by populist Islamist movements.

We argued that populist Islamists have proven themselves adept at seizing upon public anger towards often corrupt secular authoritarian regimes, and turning these negative emotions into public demand for populist solutions. Indeed, populism—combined with Islamic identity politics—has been a core element of the ideology of Turkey's ruling AKP, and a growing force in Indonesia. In both countries, populism at first appears to have the potential of contributing to a democratizaction. However, once in power populists have proven themselves to be enemies of pluralism, rule of law, and the separation of powers, core elements required for liberal democracies to operate. The book, in chapter four, demonstrate that although both Indonesia and Turkey have been overwhelmed by Islamist identity politics, Islamists have yet to win a major democratic election in Indonesia (Barton 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2021). Moreover, the rise of global populist politics interacts in complex ways with identity politics such that in much of the Muslim world populism is more potent and finds greater ready acceptance than Islamism by itself. The final section discussed social pluralism, which has come under heavy pressure in Turkey and Indonesia in recent years in the hands of Islamist political actors. Nevertheless, we argued that, new Islamic voices are emerging in both nations that are providing creative visions for plural co-existence in the Muslim world (Barton 1994, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b).

As it is demonstrated in chapters four and six, Indonesia's democratic transition remains very much a work-in-progress. The anti-Ahok protests and other occasions of radical intolerance demonstrated how far Indonesia has yet to travel to fully complete a transition to liberal democracy (Barton 2021; Hadiz 2017; Lindsey 2018). However, in certain respects, the big-picture story of democratic transition remains largely positive. In global terms, Indonesia continues to do reasonably well. The five national election cycles since the collapse of the Suharto regime have been orderly and almost entirely violence free, resulting in elections that were largely free and fair. Social surveys reveal most voters remain convinced that democracy is desirable and necessary. And as imperfect and incomplete as Indonesian democracy is, it does meet the minimal requirements for liberal democracy, at least as defined by Galston (2018). On the other hand when, in early 2017, Jokowi reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment

to religious tolerance and the moderate nature of Indonesian Islam, the stark irony of his remarks was lost on few (Hatherell 2019). Indeed, only a few days after the president's statement, Ahok, Jokowi's former deputy and gubernatorial successor, was convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to two years' jail. The transparently confected nature of Ahok's blasphemy conviction, while manifestly politically charged and driven by both the country's Muslim elites and radical Islamist fringe, represented a serious indictment of Indonesian democracy. So too was the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election that preceded it, which saw both ethnicity and religion politicized to such an extent that the once unbeatable Ahok, a Christian of Southern Chinese descent, ultimately lost the election in the April run-off to Anies Baswedan, a former minister of education and culture under Jokowi, but significantly also a Muslim of Hadhrami-Javanese and Sudanese descent.

While patriotically supportive of the Indonesian Republic, FPI fervently demanded the introduction of Shariah law and was heavily critical of democracy. "Democracy is more dangerous than pig's meat!" FPI leader Habib Rizieq Shihab once famously declared in a speech in 2013 (Wilson 2014, 2). He argued that democracy would turn Indonesians into "infidels". Throughout the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and especially during his second term, Islamist agitation and intimidation had been a growing force in Indonesian society and politics (Van Bruinessen 2013). The Islamists were bitterly disappointed with their failure to achieve the level of electoral success they believe to be God's will and their natural birthright. They blamed their failure upon the supposed evils of democracy and sought alternative avenues for natural justice and manifest destiny. As has been the case in Pakistan and other Muslim-majority democracies, the failure of radical Islamism to win over voters has seen the Islamists turn to bullying and intimidation, harnessed to the personal ambitions of authoritarian populist politicians, manifested in large-scale street protests and other activities aimed at intimidating their enemies (Barton and Yilmaz 2021a, 2021b; Barton et al. 2021a, 2021b; Yilmaz and Barton 2021a, 2021b, 2021c).

The victory of the Islamist AKP in 2002 was a product of multiple structural factors exploited by Islamist ingenuity. First, the Kemalist regime's forceful removal of Erbakan from his PM post and the closure of the RP and its successor, the FP, angered the conservative masses in Turkey, who began to believe the Islamists were victims of the Kemalist regime's oppression. Second, the Islamists' pragmatic shift of

discourse towards embracing liberal-democratic norms and the EU accession process helped the AKP promote itself as a centre-right party similar to that of Turgut Ozal, rather than a strictly Islamist party. The AKP's centrist rhetoric helped the party increase its share of the vote at subsequent elections. Third, the 1999 earthquake in Marmara and the 2001 economic crisis largely destroyed public confidence in and the legitimacy of the established political parties, both on the left- and right-wing spectrums of Turkish politics, and allowed the AKP to paint itself as a fresh alternative. It was in this **context** that the AKP came to power in 2002 and began the democratization reforms required for admission into the European Union.

A detailed analysis of the AKP's behaviour in its early years in power demonstrates how the Islamists strategically manoeuvred the ideological terrain of Turkish politics in order to first guarantee their survival and then establish their hegemony. There is an overwhelming consensus in the literature regarding the AKP's prioritization of 'survival' in its early years (Börzel and Soyaltin 2012; Hale and Ozbudun 2009). The movement in general, and the younger generation of Islamist who founded the AKP in specific, understood the importance of changing their political ideology towards democracy and the West in order to survive (Yilmaz 2000, 2008, 2009). The EU's granting of candidate status to Turkey in 1999 opened a lucrative opportunity structure for the AKP to exploit. The CHP's lack of political will to pursue reform, Turkey's continuing security problems, and the economic crisis made it all too easy for the AKP to exploit public anger towards the government and turn it into support for their political platform.

Immediately after seizing power, the AKP began to pass legislation aimed at democratization, ostensibly oriented towards fulfilling the EU's Copenhagen Criteria for admission. The scope of the proposed reforms was exhaustive. Indeed, the AKP reforms left very few areas untouched in Turkey's faulty democracy: from minority rights to freedom of speech and to civilianization of the military, all major issues were handled based on the recommendations of the EU. Karaveli shortly explains the first term of AKP government, saying that AKP "enhance[d] the separation of powers, the independence of judiciary, the freedom of press, and the rule of law" (2016). The AKP appeared to reconcile the ideas of democracy and pluralism with their Islamist mindset during their early years in power. The party embraced democracy in order to revise its Islamist founders' image, gain the support of the EU and segments of society outside its traditional

base such as Kurds, liberals, and moderate religious groups including the Gulen movement that generally voted for centre-right parties. The party "did indeed start out fully committed to intra-party democracy" (Lancaster 2014, 1673). Its candidate lists included many prominent liberals, Kurdish and even Alevi politicians, and the party ruled no one could be a candidate for MP for more than three terms, which at that time was a must to pursue political positions in the government.

Erdogan's forays from democracy to authoritarianism, and from pluralism to ultra-nationalism, shows that his ideological positions were almost solely the product of his strategic calculations. Indeed, Erdogan and the AKP had a remarkable ability to instrumentalize "peace and democracy in building an authoritarian government" (Özpek and Yasar 2018, 211) between 2002 and 2015. This ability is a novel phenomenon in political science. The second most salient feature of the AKP and Erdoğan is their ability to form coalitions with totally different segments of the society, from Kurdish to Turkish nationalists, from pro-Westerns to pro-Eurasians or from Gulenists to communist-nationalists (pro-Russian, self-declared communist party of Turkey) if need be. While cynical, the ever shifting political programme of Erdogan and the AKP show how competent and politically skilled, and moreover pragmatic, they had become during their time in politics.

Rise of Religious Populism in Indonesia and Turkey

The global rise of populism has not left the Muslim-majority world untouched. Across democratic Muslim countries, populism has become an important element of politics. Islamist populist parties and leaders dominate the politics of Turkey and Pakistan, and although they have so far failed to impact elections, have a significant amount of power in Indonesia. The rise of populism in Islamic countries has occurred for a number of reasons. Undoubtedly, the corrupt and sometimes incompetent rule of secular or non-sectarian ruling parties in some Muslim-majority countries has led to a backlash not merely against these ruling parties but against secularism itself. At the same time, the rise of Islamist populism is part of a wider rise of religious populism throughout the world. This religious populism, however, is primarily political in nature, and seek to harness religious identity—a powerful tool—and use it to create divisions in society based on religious and civilizational identity.

Around the world we see religious populists attempting to create, through their discourses, a religion-based classification of peoples, nations, and civilizations. Religious populism thus adds a civilizational element into populism.

The reasons behind the global rise of religious populism are not entirely clear. At first glance in might seem tempting to think that the growth of religious populist movements provides evidence in favour of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis. Yet religious populism so far has been less successful in initiating a clash of civilizations, but rather appears to be the outcome of clashes over identity within the world's civilizations. Moreover, the focus of religious populism involves be the division of people within nation-states into typically populist categories of 'the pure people', 'the corrupt elite', and 'others', yet based on religious identity (as opposed to religious belief and practice). Indeed, throughout this book we have demonstrated how Islamist populists in both countries have added a religion-based civilizational element to their populist discourse. In other words, populists in Turkey and Indonesia have couched populism's vertical (the people vs elite) and horizontal (the people vs others) dimensions within a broader civilizational framework in which 'the people' are defined as Muslims, and 'elites' and 'others' defined as enemies of Islam and therefore also enemies of 'the people' (Barton et al. 2021; Vergani et al. 2022). Islamist populism has shown its strength in both Turkey, where the populist AKP has assumed almost total control over the state, and in Indonesia, where it is increasingly challenging the relatively secularist state and the Islamic pluralism of civil society Islamic groups such as NU and Muhummadiyah. The anti-Ahok rallies in late 2016 and Ahok's subsequent trial and conviction for blasphemy demonstrated the power of populist Islamist discourse in Indonesia, and the failure of NU and Muhummadiyah to prevent their members from joining the rallies shows the weakness of civil Islam in the nation.

As it is discussed in the various chapters above, Islamic populists use populist images, nativism, symbols, and emotions to attract more attention by framing their political discourse in a way that resonates with the public's grievances and aspirations. They often portray themselves as the voice of the people, who are oppressed by corrupt and elitist secularists. Islamic populists also use religious symbols and rhetoric to appeal to the public's emotions and sense of identity. For example, they typically use

slogans such as "Islam is the solution" or "the Quran is our constitution" to emphasize their commitment to Islamic values and principles. Additionally, Islamic populists often use nativist rhetoric to appeal to the public's sense of nationalism and pride in their cultural heritage. They may portray themselves as defenders of the nation against foreign influences and threats. Overall, Islamic populists use these strategies to create a sense of unity and solidarity among their supporters and to mobilize them against their opponents.

In Indonesia, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) used populist rhetoric to appeal to the public's sense of grievance against the corrupt and elitist secularists. They portrayed themselves as the voice of the people who were oppressed by the secularist elites. The PKS also used religious symbols and rhetoric to appeal to the public's emotions and sense of identity (Barton 2009). They emphasized their commitment to Islamic values and principles and portrayed themselves as defenders of Islam against the secularist threat.

Similarly, in Turkey, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) used populist rhetoric to appeal to the public's sense of grievance against the secularist elites. They portrayed themselves as the voice of the people who were oppressed by the secularist establishment. The AKP also used religious symbols and rhetoric to appeal to the public's emotions and sense of identity. They emphasized their commitment to Islamic values and principles and portrayed themselves as defenders of Islam against the secularist threat.

Overall, it is clear that Islamic populists use these strategies to create a sense of unity and solidarity among their supporters and to mobilize them against their opponents. This use of Islamist populist ideas threatens to lead countries towards authoritarianism, and Islamic populists in both Indonesia and Turkey have been responsible for de-democratizing their societies. Indeed, striking a pessimistic note, Peterson and Shäffer (2021) argue that "although Islamist parties have been unable to secure mainstream popular support in post-reform Indonesia, and GNPF-MUI's key figures failed to secure positions of greater prominence for themselves, their agendas continue to shape mainstream politics". Moreover, they point out how militant fringe actors, while in themselves not particularly powerful or significant, may become "temporary proxies for political elites" and, through them, affect "Indonesia's democratic institutions" and the country's "long-term democratic trajectory". From a purely electoral perspective, however, Islamist populist parties have not proven viable

in Indonesia, and NU and Muhammadiyah have not succumbed to radicalism and populism. The relative failure of Indonesia's various populist groups and individual preachers is perhaps a product of the strength of civil Islam, and of the religious yet non-sectarian character of the Indonesian constitution and its major civil Islamic groups. In Turkey, by contrast, the constitution was deeply secularist and inspired by France's strict separation of religion and politics known as *laïcité*. The Kemalist regime persecuted Muslim critics of the regime, and attempted to refashion Turkey as a secular European nation. Secularism became associated with the authoritarianism of the Kemalists, and moreover with corruption and European imperialism.

Thus, in Indonesia secularism was not nearly so badly tarnished by its instrumentalisation by authoritarianism in the manner that it was in Turkey. Nor were Indonesia's civil Islamic movements as naive as the Gulen movement in Turkey in giving active support to an Islamist party, albeit one posing as a liberal-democratic Muslim party (Barton 2014). The destruction of the Gulen movement left little Muslim opposition to the AKP's increasingly populist and Islamist rule. In contrast, Indonesia's civil Islam movements—though they are facing many challenges from populist preachers and increasing religious conservatism—remain largely outside of politics and continue to promote pluralism throughout Indonesian society. It appears, then, that Indonesia stands a strong chance of holding back the rise of Islamist populism. Perhaps, the country's greatest weakness is its poor governance, which effectively opens the door to populists who can argue that Indonesia's 'elites' are corrupt and incompetent and care little for the average Indonesian, and therefore must be removed from power. Therefore, it is vital that Indonesia's government practise good governance and make stronger attempts to combat the country's endemic corruption problem. To fail in these tasks is to leave populists with an opportunity and the means to further challenge pluralism and representative democracy in Indonesia, just as government failure and the perception of a crisis allowed populists to take power in Turkey.

The rise of Islamist populism in Indonesia and Turkey is in some ways the result of the changing sense of national identity experienced by citizens as secularist regimes first failed to suppress Islam, then attempted to control Islam through state bodies (the MUI and Diyanet respectively), and in the case of Turkey finally succumbed to Islamist populism. Throughout the tumultuous twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the

ruling regimes of both countries have sought to remake their citizens into an ideal image. For example, after establishing the secular Turkish Republic in 1923, Ataturk embarked on an ambitious nation-building project aimed at the homogenization of the Turkish republic with a secular Sunni Turkish identity and employed new institutions such as the Diyanet and secular public schools to propagate its ideology which discarded Ottoman history and ideals, denigrated all minorities and promoted assertive secularism.In Indonesia, the Sukarno and Suharto regimes were less aggressively secularist but insisted on a non-sectarian constitution that identified the ideal Indonesian as—if not a Muslim exactly—at least a monotheist. In both nations, there was an attempt to homogenize citizens, although this was far more difficult in highly diverse Indonesia. The fall of the Kemalist regime and resignation of Suharto brought forth great changes to Indonesia and Turkey, bringing to power new parties and leaders with new and different conceptions of national identity. While the Habibie and Wahid governments very much supported the ideals of Pancasila, under Yudhoyono Indonesia began to empower the increasingly conservative—at times radical—MUI (Barton 2013). In doing so, the government shifted Indonesian identity in an Islamic direction, threatening the long standing pluralism for which Indonesia is rightly praised.

In Turkey, the AKP has seized on the mistakes of its Kemalist and Gulenist enemies, and utterly destroyed almost all opposition to its Islamist rule. The party's power has allowed it to remake Turkish identity, pushing the country in an Islamist direction through a variety of means, but especially through its control of Diyanet, the media, and the school system. The situation in Turkey's schools, where students are force-fed a diet of Islamism and taught to despise the alleged enemies of Islamic civilization, is particularly salient.

In his extensive study on 'Religious education in the Muslim world', Leirvik (2004) found that the 'confessional model' of religious education still prevails in much of the Muslim world. In countries with Christian minorities such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine, 'public schools normally offer Christian education as a parallel to Islamic education' (Leirvik 2004, 226). In contrast to these 'dual-option' countries, in Saudi Arabia, religious education involves only Islam. Moreover, in Saudi Arabia "in textbooks for Islamic education, Christians and Jews are generally depicted as 'disbelievers' and enemies of Islam with whom no friendly

relations should be established" (Leirvik 2004, 225). Indonesia has 'multiple options' system where the adherents of five officially recognized religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism) receive education based on their beliefs. This policy emanates from Indonesia's 'unique, multireligious conception of national identity known as the Pancasila ideology' (Leirvik 2004, 228). Similar to Saudi Arabia, Turkey also offers only a single option, Islam in religious education. As a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools, religious education utilizes 'a variety of Islamic symbols in order to enhance loyalty to the secular nation-state, for instance by rationalizing Islamic precepts or using terms related to religious revival to legitimize the Republic's emphasis on progress' (Leirvik 2004, 229). But this Islamic education it is not only limited to Islam, excluding the beliefs of Turkish religious minorities, but it limited the education to Sunni Islam, excluding other Muslim denominations of non-Sunni Turks.

Education thus became a means through which the AKP was able to establish a new identity for Turkey, which is a populist Islamic identity in which Muslims were threatened by the Judeo-Christian West and must fight to free themselves from Western influence. By contrast, in Indonesia, however, the pluralist school system, backed by the country's non-sectarian constitution, prevents the MUI or Islamist populist groups from using state schools to remake/reconstruct Indonesian identity. To put it differently, fortunately, at this point in Indonesian history for Islamist radicals find limited opportunity to teach Indonesian children to detest non-Muslims, or to regard themselves as the authentic people of Indonesia, in the manner that has completely distorted the school system in Turkey.

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Index

A
Abdulhamid II, 31, 37
Ahok, 113, 123, 124, 126, 128, 140, 143
Alevis, 38, 39, 45, 102
Anti-communism, 17
Arab countries, 15, 16
Ataturk (Mustafa Kemal Ataturk), 36, 37, 45, 146

B
Balyoz, 90

C
Caliph, 31
Chinese Muslims, 17, 59
Civil Islamists, 7, 81, 82, 104, 105, 143, 145
Civilizational, 2, 20, 126, 143
Cold War, vi, 1–3, 6, 16, 17, 42, 44, 59, 70
Colonization, vi, 1–3, 6, 48, 62
Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), 31, 37, 38, 40
Communist parties, 17, 92, 142
Communists, 43, 67, 70, 71, 73, 75
Copenhagen Criteria, 86, 88, 90, 141

D
Dahlan, Ahmad, 65
Democracy, v–vii, 1, 3, 5, 6, 13, 14, 21, 22, 40, 42, 50, 51, 66, 71, 83, 87, 88, 92, 93, 99, 105, 114, 120, 125, 128, 129, 138–142, 145
Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII), 119, 120
Dewan Perkawilan Rakyat, 64
Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, 72
Diyanet, 39, 45, 89, 95, 101, 103, 145, 146
Dutch, 59, 61, 62, 69, 75, 102

E
Erbakan, 48–50, 83–85, 87, 140

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Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip, 83, 85–98, 100–102, 104, 105, 142
Erdogan, Shipoli, 49, 142
Ergenekon, 90
European Union (EU), 49, 50, 83, 85–89, 91, 93, 98, 102, 105, 141

G
Gezi [protests], 91
Gezi Park, 90, 91, 94
Golkar, 72, 74, 75
Green Belt, 82
Guided Democracy, 66, 67, 69, 70, 75
Gulen, 46, 93, 95, 96, 98, 99, 142, 145
Gulenists, 93, 95–100, 102, 146

H
Hizbut-Tahrir, 119
Horizontal populism, 2, 5

I
Identity politics, vi, vii, 1, 2, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 51, 138, 139
Indonesia, vi, viii, 3–5, 7, 14, 20, 59, 63, 67, 69, 70, 72, 113–116, 119–121, 124, 126, 128, 129, 138, 139, 143–147
Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI), 119
Islamic Caliphate, vii, 29
Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), 113, 122–128, 140
Islamism, vii, 5, 17, 20, 21, 29–31, 33, 47, 48, 51, 74, 98, 100, 105, 113, 116–118, 121, 128, 138, 140, 146

J
Justice and Development Party (AKP), vi, vii, 21, 22, 50, 81–83, 86–93, 96–98, 100–105, 138, 139, 141–144, 146, 147

K
Kemalism, 37–41, 45, 82, 104
Kemalist ideology, 37, 39
Kurdish Opening, 86, 91, 92
Kurds, 4, 38, 39, 86–88, 91, 92, 95, 102, 142

L
Laskar Jihad, 120
Laskar Mujahidin, 120

M
Madjid, Nurcholish, 7, 68, 114
Masyarakat, 60
Masyumi, 64, 66, 69, 70, 73, 74, 118
Mataram Empire, 61
Maududi, 73, 74
Military tutelage, 43, 44, 82, 83
Milli Gorus, 46, 50, 81
Modernization, 4
Modern Republic, 33
Modern Turkey, 33, 36
Motherland Party (ANAP), 84
Muhammad Abduh, 65
Muhammadiyah, 59, 64–66, 71, 73, 75, 114, 119
Muslim-majority countries, 29, 42, 51, 142

N
Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), 59, 64, 66, 71, 73, 114
Nasution, 69, 70

National Order Party (MNP), 48, 49, 84
Natsir, 73, 74, 118
New Order, 34, 35, 67, 71, 118
Nizam-i Cedid, 34

O
Old Order, 67, 71
Ottoman Empire, vii, 15, 29–38, 40, 51
Ottoman Islamism, vii, 29, 31
Ottomanism, 30–32, 36
Ozal, Turgut, 50, 84, 87, 141

P
Pancasila ideology, 59, 147
Parmusi, 74, 118
Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), 64, 69
Partai Pembangunan Indonesia (PPP), 72, 74, 75, 117, 121
Pluralism, vi, 13, 14, 20–22, 38, 51, 88, 92, 105, 121, 138, 139, 142, 143, 145, 146
Political Islamist, vii, 29, 46, 65, 138
Populism, v–viii, 2–7, 13, 14, 20–22, 29, 41, 59, 84, 105, 113, 121, 122, 125, 127, 128, 137–139, 142, 143, 145
Portuguese, 59–61

R
Radical Islamists, 50, 64, 72, 83, 113, 115–117, 119–121, 138, 140
Rahman, Fazlur, 68
Reformasi Era, 7
Religion, v–viii, 1–5, 13, 17, 18, 21, 22, 29, 30, 40, 51, 63, 85, 95, 101, 116, 137, 138, 140, 143, 147
Religious populism, vii, 5, 19, 20, 81, 82, 126, 128, 142, 143
Republican People's Party (CHP), 41, 42, 81, 91, 92, 94, 141
Rise of Islamism, vii, 6, 13, 18, 22, 29, 32, 84, 137

S
Salafism, 81, 82
Santri, 121
Santri Muslims, 121
Secularism, 4, 6, 18, 32, 33, 38, 43, 46, 47, 51, 82–84, 102, 138, 142, 145, 146
Sevres Complex, 38
Shades of populism, 13
Six Arrows, 41
Suharto, vii, 7, 59, 66, 67, 71–76, 113, 114, 117, 118, 120, 123, 128, 139, 146
Sukarno, 59, 62–67, 69–71, 73, 75, 118, 146

T
The Crescent Moon and Star Party (PBB), 121
The Dutch East India Company (VOC), 61, 62
The Jakarta Charter, 63–65, 69, 73, 118
The Megawati, 115
The New York Agreement, 70
The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), 121, 144
Tunisia, 14
Turkey, v–viii, 1, 3, 4, 6, 14, 20–22, 29, 32, 33, 36–40, 42–44, 46–51, 71, 82–84, 86–90, 92–95, 97, 99–102, 104–106, 137–147

Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (TİS), 45, 46, 82

U
Ummah, 6, 7, 21, 31, 46, 48, 102, 105, 121, 122, 126

V
Vertical populism, 2, 143

W
Wahhabist, 119
Wahid, Abdurrahman, 7, 114
Wali Sanga, 60
Weak democracy, 14
Welfare Party, 49, 84, 86

Y
Young Ottomans, 30, 35, 36

Z
Zheng, He, 59

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